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Research Materials/Source Documents

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Feature

Making history

Maxwell plays role in establishing air mail route

by Jerome Ennels
Director, AU Office of History

Early on the morning of April 17, 1925, a small aircraft flown by Maxwell Field people came slowly into view in the western skies near Montgomery. Within minutes the plane had landed at Maxwell and a host of military and civilian officials rushed out to greet the young aviators and to view their precious cargo. Lt. Robert D. Knapp and his able mechanic, Sgt. J. A. Liner, had just delivered the first official airmail ever to the city of Montgomery.

Their journey was the first leg of a preliminary test to establish an airmail route between the Gulf Coast and Northern Great Lakes areas. The test, which also included stations in New Orleans, Mobile, Birmingham, Nashville, Tenn., Indianapolis and Chicago, was designed to see whether mail could be flown daily from New Orleans via intermediate points to Chicago in time to make connections with the regular westward and eastward transcontinental airmail service.

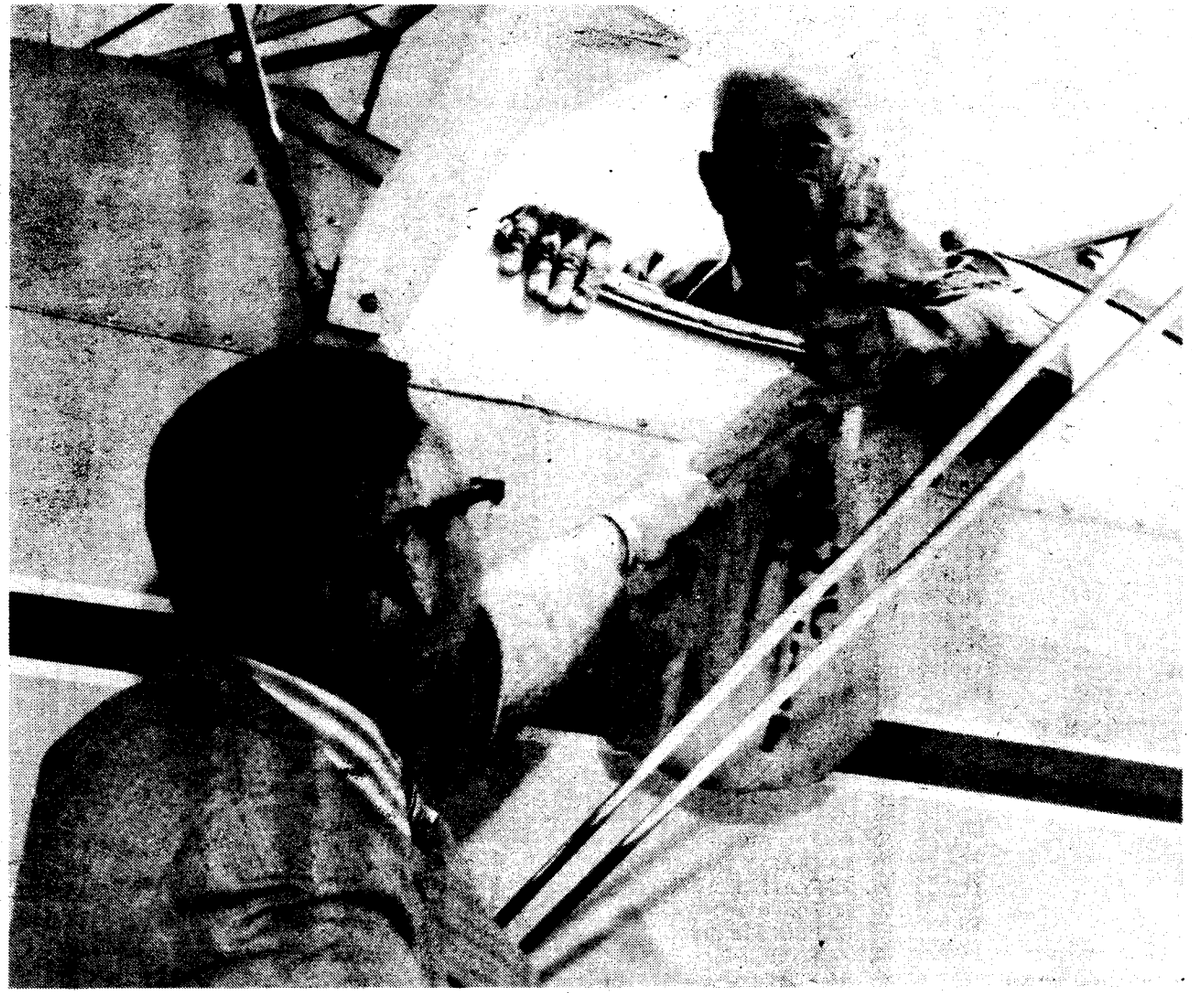
(Air Force photo)

A DeHavilland 4-B, like this one, was used in 1925 by Lt. Robert D. Knapp and Sgt. J.A. Liner in the first leg of a preliminary test to establish an official airmail route from the Gulf Coast to the Northern Great Lakes area.

Peters Field in New Orleans at 11 a.m. the previous morning in one of the field's eight DeHaviland-4Bs. The aircraft, powered by a 420-horsepower Liberty engine and flying at nearly 110 miles-per-hour, had traveled the 321 miles to the crescent city in only 2 hours and 40 minutes. Once there, the fliers were greeted by a welcoming committee and subsequently sworn in as mail carriers.

At the crack of dawn the next morning, Lieutenant Knapp and Sergeant Liner left Peters Field and began the first leg of their historic journey with six bags of mail destined for Mobile and numerous northern cities. Arriving in Mobile at 6:45 a.m., they remained in the gulf coast city only long enough to pick up more mail before heading north to Montgomery.

In Montgomery, many of the city's leading citizens and military personnel were anxiously awaiting their arrival. Among them were Congressman Lister Hill, Governor William W. Brandon and Maj. Roy Brown, the commander of Maxwell. Montgomery Postmaster Roy F. Lifsey was also present and later swore in Capts. Asa N. Duncan and J. A. Simpson (scheduled to fly the second leg of the test flight) as mail carriers.



(Air Force photo)

Retired Brig. Gen. Robert D. Knapp (right) reenacts his April 16, 1925 airmail flight from New Orleans to Montgomery on the event's 50th anniversary. The reenactment took place at Dannelly Field in Montgomery.

Several days earlier local citizens had been notified "that mail intended for the air service on the first flight Friday must be in the post office by 8 o'clock Friday morning." According to the announcement, "Letters must be endorsed by 'Air Mail Service' and must carry the proper postage." The proper postage, depending on where it was to be delivered, ranged from 8 to 24 cents. At 8:42 a.m. and 18 minutes ahead of schedule, a second DH-4 piloted by Captain Duncan and loaded with mail from New Orleans, Mobile, and Montgomery took off enroute to Birmingham.

The second leg of the flight was relatively uneventful with the aircraft stopping in Birmingham to pick up more mail before flying on to Nashville. There, Lt. Vincent J. Meloy and Capt. Herbert Fox took over to begin the third leg of the journey in yet another airplane. Their flight, destined for Louisville, Ky., Indianapolis, and Chicago began at about noon in a drizzling rain. Though the DH-4 was not designed to fly in such weather, Lieutenant Meloy continued to pilot his plane through a subsequent driving rain on to Louisville and Chicago, bypassing Indianapolis.

They landed in Chicago at 4:20 p.m. in good time to make the necessary connection with the transcontinental airmail service. Registered mail valued at more than $3 million had been transported to the "windy city" in a record breaking time of less than 12 hours. Post office authorities and airmail officials, who observed each stage of the test flight, ruled it an unqualified success.

In the final analysis, Maxwell had added another chapter to its then short, but proud history. Not only had local field personnel flown the initial leg of the trial test, they were also largely responsible for the development and execution of the entire plan.

"The perfect manner in which all arrangements were carried out by the officers at Maxwell Field . . . would probably have considerable effect in obtaining the permanent air service at an early date," said Congressman Hill. It undoubtedly did.

Feature

(Air Force Photos)

Flying sergeants in drill formation.

Old Mill

Training center for Flying Sergeants rekindles memories

by CMSgt. (Ret.) Herman C. Wood
Former Flying Sergeant

It was often crowded, noisy, hot and muggy, but the Old Mill at the Southeast Army Air Force Preflight Training Center was always filled with enthusiastic and eager GIs during 1942.

The Old Mill was located several city blocks outside Maxwell Field on Bell Street, the main thoroughfare between Maxwell and the center of Montgomery.

It was an old and long-abandoned or possibly condemned three-story brick cotton mill located in a compound the size of a half city block. The mill was partially enclosed by a chain link fence and surrounded on several sides by a large housing project.

The history of Maxwell Field reveals less on the Old Mill than it does on the Sergeant Pilot program. It states, "Another type of preflight trainee was the 'Flying Sergeant.' They offered no serious problem. They took the same courses as cadets, but assigned to different classrooms. The Flying Sergeant did not mix well with cadets, largely because of the cadets' superior attitude. There were reports of occasional beatings taken by cadets who attempted to force Flying Sergeants to salute them.

"Because of overcrowded conditions in the academic area, this type of trainee was later housed in the Old Mill nearly a half mile away. Living conditions were not ideal whenever large groups were involved. Classroom facilities were also established at the mill.

"The Flying Sergeants, housed first in a tent city and later at the Old Mill, had many well-founded grievances. The long delay entailed before they could enter preflight school appeared to them unfair, as indeed it did to the authorities at SEAAFTC."

The Flying Sergeants, as a separate detachment, left the Old Mill in early fall 1942 which would coincide with the enactment of the Flight Officer Act.

The lowest level, or basement, was partially underground and contained an old rusty boiler which, at one time, had been used to power the mill machinery. The middle Old mill floor was used for administration, supply, mess and academic classrooms. The third floor was one huge open bay with double deck bunks to accommodate 500 to 600 students. The floors were constructed of very sturdy wood, but heavily saturated with cotton oil.

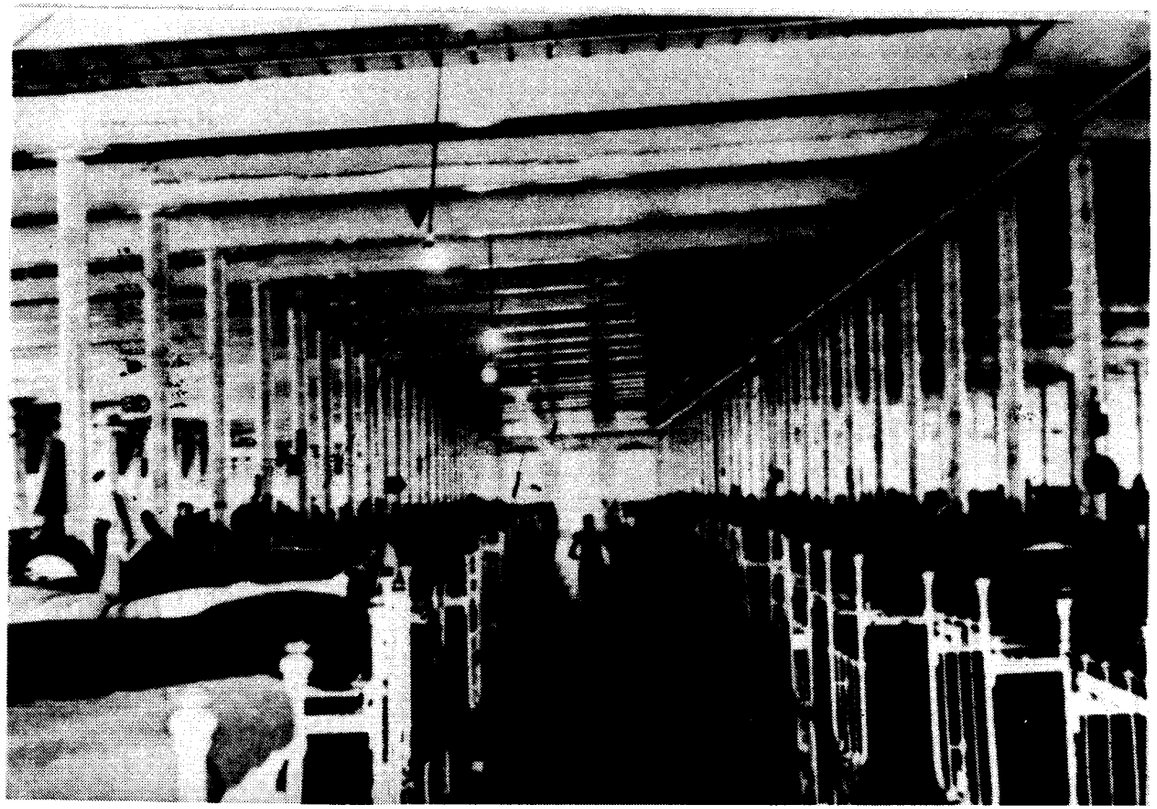
Initially, the classrooms were separated by sheets and blankets suspended from wire and rope. In time, this temporary partitioning was replace with wallboard or plywood and more substantial structures. The ceiling was high and the noise level was extremely high which echoed throughout the academic area.

Military and civilian instructors were assigned to conduct classes in theory of flight, flight rules and regulations, meteorology, engineering, navigation and communications (Morse code).

Military discipline and academics were the order of the day at preflight despite the chaotic conditions. There was no hazing or punishment tours, and drill and physical conditioning was conducted six days a week, along with preflight classes. Depending on rank, the students were required to perform routine duties such as charge of quarters, kitchen police, and bay and latrine orderly.

There are many fond memories of this hectic period in our lives. We recall the mixture of potential Flying Sergeants from different career fields and ranks ranging from private to master sergeant. It was noisy, hectic and exciting, but gradually settled down to a class routine, and we did learn a great deal. Most of all, we wanted to fly and in a few short months, we did!

The Old Mill has long since been demolished and the site is now a children's playground. The happy cries of children have replaced the echoes of hup, two, three, four, "ditty, dit dah" of the Flying Sergeants.



This open bay housed anywhere from 500 to 600 aviator students at one time.

History

Painting reveals glimpse of Maxwell's past

by Rob Young
Air University History Office

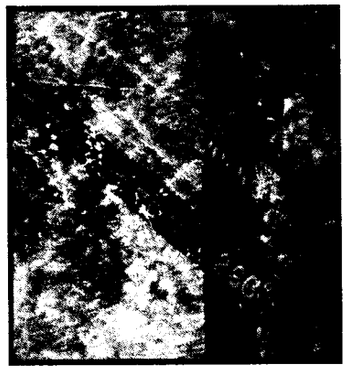
An obscured painting of Maxwell Field in the west attic of Simler Hall — Maxwell building 836 — offers interesting lessons in the history of the base and the building which now houses the Community College of the Air Force headquarters.

The building dates to 1928. The painting — on the attic's solid concrete floor — shows the airfield in a configuration dating to the late 30s or early 40s. To the west of the field are diagonally crossed lines with course headings, Morse Code signals, and directions to places like Fort. Benning, Ga., and Meridian, Miss.

Information provided by pilots of Maxwell's 457th Airlift Squadron, Detachment 2, suggested that the map depicted a beacon for air traffic. This clarified what it depicted, but failed to answer the question, "What is this doing in the attic of an old enlisted man's barracks?"

A review of Maxwell Field history confirmed a very powerful radio range station was completed here in 1939. It stood two and one half miles west of the base on Hunter Loop Road and served a large area of the Southeast.

(Photo by Greg Johnson)
Rob Young discusses the painting with Beth Scott, CCAF historian.



An article in a 1939 Montgomery newspaper described exactly the symbols painted on the attic floor. It also mentioned the radio range station was under the command of the base communications officer and was a part of the vast Army Airways Communications System. This system divided the United States into regions.

On Dec. 16, 1940, Maxwell Field became the headquarters for the Fourth Army Airways Communications Region. A copy of the 4th Army Airways Communications Squadron history — obtained at Maxwell's Air Force Historical Research Agency — described the crowded conditions of the base in 1941. The unit's troops bunked in a tent city and ate with the 83rd School Squadron.

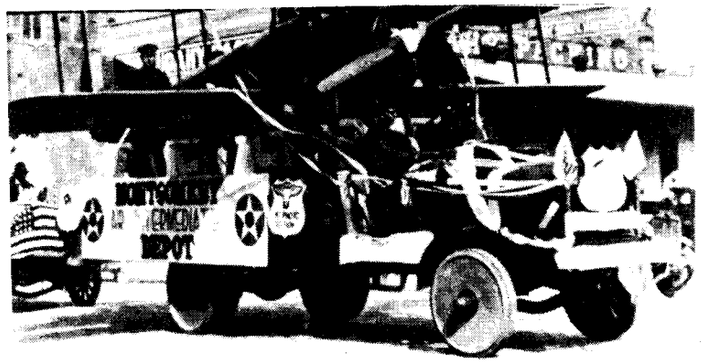
Most importantly, the history mentioned that the 4th AACS maintained a supply room "in the attic of Building 101." The history also described a three-week training course they offered to the Air Corps air traffic controllers in the Southeast.

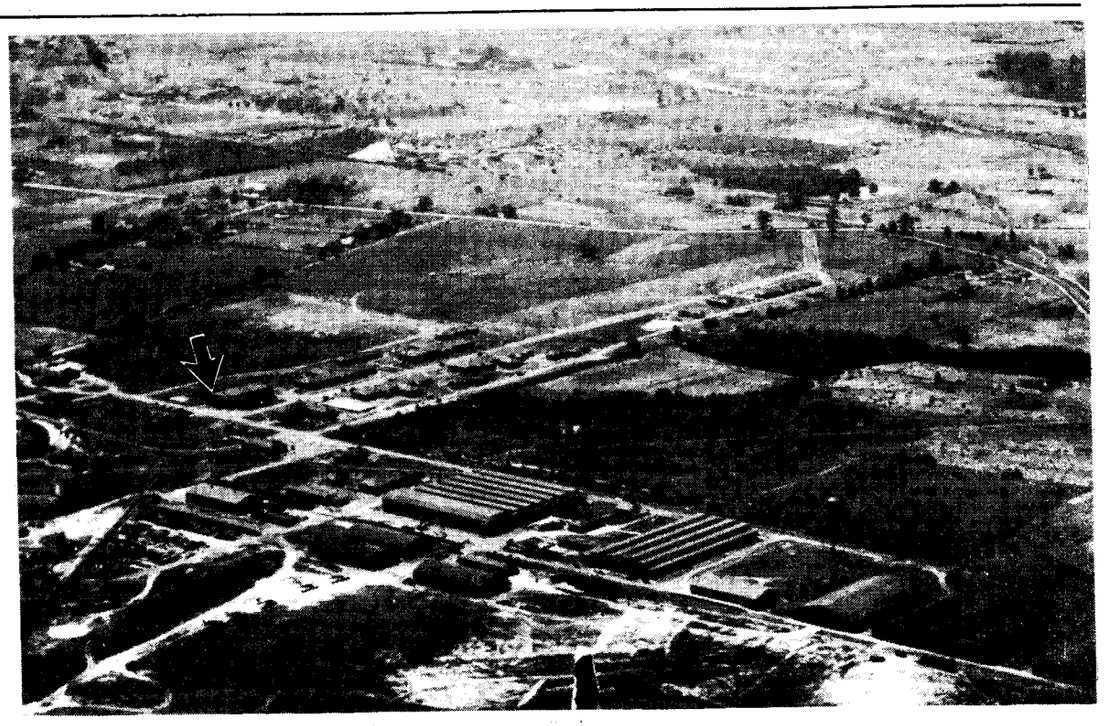
Civil engineering records confirmed that in 1941 building 836 was building 101. The pieces of the puzzle fell into place. The painting in the attic was an instructional tool for new air traffic controllers and was put in the attic simply because the crowded conditions forced the 4th AACS to use any space available. This was very common in that day. The Army Airways Communications System history mentions most units had to use "a corner of a barracks or a small room" to train these pioneers of air traffic control.

An article in the May 23, 1942 *Southeast Army Air Forces Training Center News* confirmed the purpose of the painting and even named the artist: TSgt. Joseph W. Perry. A photograph in the paper clearly shows the painting, plus model buildings and airplanes that really made it look like a "simulation" of Maxwell Field.

Today, the supply room is mostly intact and the painting is visable, although partially covered by an air conditioning unit. The legacy of enlisted technical training lives on in the old building below the painting — 24 of the 64 credit hours needed for a CCAF degree come from Air Force technical training.

Since its completion in 1928, the building has served not only as an enlisted man's barracks, but an important part of early air traffic control at Maxwell.





Remembering

Parading in Montgomery's 1921 Armistice Day parade was this 22nd Observation Squadron float (above). Below, troops from that squadron prepare for a 1923 Saturday morning inspection — note the full packs and sidearms. The aerial view of "Maxwell" in 1918 (above right), shows some of the only 52 buildings here then. The basic roadways shown in the photograph are still here. The arrow shows about where the Airmen's Dining Hall is located today.

(Courtesy photos)

The good, old days

World War I—Maxwell's mission wasn't shaping minds; troops here were busy shaping cracked, bent, broken 'aeroplanes'

by Jerome A. Ennels
Air University Historian

Over the years the name Maxwell has become synonymous with Air Force professional military education. The mere mention of the name brings quickly to mind thoughts of the old Air Corps Tactical School, the Army Air Forces School, and Air University. Some may also recall the base's training mission during World War II when the installation served as the home of the Southeast Air Corps Training Center, a forerunner of today's Air Training Command. But few, if any, can remember or even know of the base's original but short lived mission as one of the nation's first military aviation repair depots.

THAT MISSION BEGAN shortly after the United States entered World War I and the Army began establishing military flying training fields throughout the nation. To insure that these fields were constantly supplied with planes and engines so that flying training could proceed uninterrupted, the Army established aviation repair depots in Dallas, Texas, Indianapolis, Ind., and Montgomery. Overtures to acquire 302 acres of land near Montgomery for this purpose began in 1918. On April 4 the deal was struck and the land was leased to the federal government.

The site selected had been used in 1910 by the Wright brothers to conduct flying activities and was affectionately known as "Wright Field." The post's first official name, however, was Engine and Repair Depot though that name was quickly changed to Aviation Repair Depot No. 3. By December 1918, the field's name was changed again to simply Aviation Repair Depot, a name it retained until 1921 when it was redesignated the Montgomery Air Intermediate Depot. The following year, it was renamed Maxwell Field in honor of 2nd Lt. William C. Maxwell, an Atmore, Ala., native who lost his life in a plane crash in the Philippines.

Construction at the field started on April 8, 1918 when the James Alexander Construction Company of Memphis, Tenn., began erecting 52 temporary buildings on the site. These buildings were all made of wood since it was almost impossible to obtain structural steel during the national emergency and it was considered inadvisable and inexpedient to use brick or concrete. More than 1,200 men were employed in the frantic effort to meet the wartime demand for military air fields. The project, including three miles of tarvia-surfaced roads, cost the government about $819,000 and was completed on July 7, 1918 — only three months after construction began.

ONCE COMPLETED AND EQUIPPED, the depot was capable of repairing and manufacturing nearly every single part of an airplane. Its woodworking shop, for example, produced fuselage struts, seat rail supports, floor boards, joy sticks, and more. Thousands of aluminum castings were also made in the depot's machine shop for bolts, nuts, clevis pins, and numerous other parts. In addition, the depot's sheet metal shop made fittings of all kinds. And of course, hundreds of mechanics repaired or completely overhauled airplane engines as necessary.

The flying field adjacent to the shops was used primarily to test repaired aircraft. These planes filled the skies daily and as one field officer noted, "on only a few of the stormiest days have no ships been flown." Yet, during its first year of operation, field personnel boasted of having "the only flying field in the United States where no serious accidents ever occurred."

During the first three months of operation, most of the planes repaired at the depot were Thomas Morse Scouts. These little single seaters were "swift as an eagle" and were in constant use at various flying fields during the closing months of the war. Usually, the ones arriving at the depot had been involved in minor accidents and had cracked wings, broken landing gear, and twisted fuselages. Nonetheless, repairing them required particular care and attention. As one depot member explained: "Each scout had personality, so to speak, and the alignment of the delicately-tapered fuselage calls for skillful fingers, intuition and finesse."

THE DEPOT ALSO REPAIRED several DeHaviland (DH)-4s. Repair of DeHaviland planes, however, presented an even more delicate task since its wings were so "daintily fashioned" that they seemed to have been "made of holes, with just enough wood to bind the holes together." The DH-4, incidentally, was the first and only American combat plane to fly over enemy territory during World War I.

There were also a few Curtiss planes repaired at the depot during those initial months. The number of these planes arriving at the field grew steadily until by the end of the year nearly all the planes repaired there were Curtiss planes of one type or another.

The depot's largest single project was the repair of a Handley-Page, which was wrecked about 60 miles from Montgomery. It arrived at the field severely damaged and loaded on three flat cars. With the exception of a new center section, most of the broken parts were replaced by new ones manufactured at the depot and the plane was quickly returned to flying status.

SIX MONTHS AFTER THE DEPOT BEGAN OPERATION, however, the war ended and activity at the post was curtailed. Though many camps and airfields were subsequently abandoned, the Aviation Repair Depot in Montgomery was made a permanent facility and on Jan. 11, 1920, the government purchased the leased land it occupied for $34,327. The following July the installation ceased operation as a repair depot and began functioning as a supply field.

During the years that followed, the installation became a home of many varying missions, ranging from observation activities to pilot training. Educational activities, however, dominated the base's functions after 1945.

Long before Maxwell's educational activities ever began, the base had earned the reputation as "the best aviation post in the country" while performing its first and very important logistical mission of "keeping the planes in the air."

AL 19-3.1

Enlisted Pilots at Maxwell Win Commissions

(Jun 27, 1935)

Of the 475 enlisted men who underwent exams, 40 were appointed second lieutenants in the regular Air Corps. Six of the fourty were stationed at Maxwell including SSgt Clifton who finished first of 475. All were graduates of the Air Corps Primary Flying School, qualified airplane pilots and members of the Air Corps section of the Officer's Reserve Corps.

Staff Sergeant Ray W. Clifton

Corporal J.D. Pittman Huntsville

Private Edward M. Gavin

Private James H. Price Florala

Private C.H. Leitner, Jr.

Private Russell L. Waldron Montgomery

Sergeant Ray W. Clifton

--President, Montgomery Air Pilots Club 1934

--Expert pilot widely known in aviation circles

--Graduate of the Air Corps Primary Flying School

--Qualified airplane pilot and member of Officer's Reserve Corps

--Served with Maxwell Field Inspection Department

--Served with three other enlisted pilots from Maxwell Field as airmail pilots in 1934

--Inaugurated weather observations for US Weather Bureau on "air-mass" method of forecasting thunderstorms 1934

---During weather observations flew O-19 airplane to 17,700 feet without oxygen

---Used radio telephone system to relay observations to the ground

--Won regular commission by finishing first of the 475 enlisted men who underwent exams and 40 who won appointments as second lieutenants

Maxwell Flood Relief, 1929

by Jerome A. Ennels

Aerial view of Brewton, Alabama on 17 March 1929; a photo taken by reconnaissance aircraft from Maxwell Field. Road patterns are discernible, but houses are inundated. State authorities turned quickly to Maxwell for help.(USAF photo)

In early March 1929, excessive spring rains caused rivers from Mississippi eastward to the Atlantic Ocean to overflow, inundating several town and cities and threatening many others. The Mississippi River, for example, was over or near flood stage from Memphis, Tennessee, to its mouth in the Gulf of Mexico. In Alabama, the Tallapoosa, Tombigbee, Pea, Choctawatchee, and other rivers had swollen to record levels. Nearby in Georgia, the Chattahoochee River was at flood stage in every area south of West Point, Georgia. North Carolina also joined the flood-ridden states as water from its mountain streams stretched far beyond their normal banks. Worst still, more rain was predicted for most of the areas experiencing high waters.[1]

Among the states affected, however, Alabama was by far the hardest hit, particularly its southernmost sections. There, more than a dozen south Alabama towns and cities were almost entirely submerged in flood waters, highways and railroads had been completely washed away, and all communication with the outside world had been totally severed. In addition, thousands of people had been forced from their homes, and many were marooned on knolls and rooftops. Though there were initially few deaths, state officials predicted that unless aid was received promptly, the number of deaths (due to drowning, starvation, disease, and exposure) would reach disastrous proportions.[2]

Extent of Disaster

First word of the tragic situation in southern Alabama came from Elba, a town located approximately 70 miles southeast of Montgomery, the capital. At about 1530 on 14 March, a message was sent to the capital asking that help be sent at once and stating that all Elba was flooded. A courageous operator in Elba -- with water sloshing about her ankles -- answered a subsequent call from Montgomery and briefly described the grave situation of the town before rising flood waters cut the only remaining telephone lines. Further south in Geneva, a town lying about 30 miles southeast of Elba, water was reportedly waist deep in the streets, with the nearby Choctawatchee and Pea Rivers already above the highest level ever in the past 20 years and still rising. The situation in the neighboring towns of Georgiana, Andalusia, Brewton, Pollard, Castleberry, and Flomaton was similar, with flood waters nearly covering all one-story buildings. Other cities in the areas seriously affected by the flood included Keego, River Falls, Gantt, Samson, and Sparta. The situation prompted Alabama's governor, the Hon. Bibb Graves, to broadcast an appeal for help over radio station WAPI, urging that relief be sent to these areas immediately and declaring that unless aid was received within the next six to eight hours "all will be dead."[3]

Shortly thereafter, Governor Graves ordered two companies of the Alabama National Guard to the flooded areas to begin rescue operations. Though equipped with large trucks and boats, treacherous roads and strong currents prevented them from reaching most of the flood-stricken area. In addition, washouts along rail lines precluded access to these areas by train. Consequently the Governor quickly realized that the airplane was the only available means of providing the food and other supplies so desperately

needed for the survival of thousands of flood refugees. As a result, at 2100 on 14 March, he called Maj. Walter R. Weaver, the Commanding Officer of Maxwell Field, and asked for his assistance in providing relief to the flood victims.[4]

Major Weaver immediately pledged Maxwell's support and assured the Governor that every resource at the Field would be used to assist in the crisis. Within minutes, he had assembled his staff and declared a state of emergency. Military leaves were revoked, and no one was allowed to leave the station without special permission. All activities except those related to the relief effort were suspended, and work began promptly on developing the plans and strategies necessary for conducting a massive flood-relief mission.[5]

By midnight, truckloads of food, clothing, and medical and other supplies began arriving at the Field from the American Red Cross. Soldiers worked desperately throughout the night removing items from boxes and packing them into bags to be air-dropped to flood victims. A radio truck was also dispatched from the field shortly after midnight to a point six miles north of Elba for the purpose of establishing and maintaining communications between the post and those who would be working in the area of the flood. At dawn, on 15 March, Maxwell personnel were ready to begin what was later called "the most stupendous relief expedition in the history of any air corps."[6]

Airlift Begins

The expedition began at 0530 on the morning of 15 March, when 11 planes -- Maxwell's entire aircraft inventory -- left the field en route to the flood-stricken towns lying from 60 to 150 miles south of the station. For three hours the pilots observed the flood conditions and, in most cases, found the situations to be even worse than initially expected. At Elba, for example, earlier reports had indicated that the water was only waist deep and basically confined to the downtown area. The pilots found instead an area of approximately six square miles flooded with water varying in depth from 10 to 30 feet and numerous frame dwellings actually collapsed from the pressure of onrushing waters. The situation in most of the other neighboring towns was similar, with the flood waters also causing havoc in the suburban areas and countrysides.[7]

Maxwell Field soldiers ready to begin the task of sorting and dropping relief supplies stacked in a hangar at the field. (USAF photo)

Maj. Walter Weaver, Maxwell Field commander, talks on the phone (right) while his staff officers and a civilian liaison person go about the business of relief. (USAF photo)

Communication with the flood victims was established quickly by dropping panels for sending coded messages. Because most of the refugees were unfamiliar with the Army Air Corps-Red Cross message code, a special edition of the 15 March Montgomery morning newspaper, the *Advertiser*, containing the message code and instructions on how to use it, were dropped with the panels. In some cases, communications were established in less than five minutes and the refugees were able to inform the air crews of their most urgent needs. The planes then returned to Maxwell where they were refueled, given maintenance checks, and loaded with the needed supplies. In less than half an hour, the aircraft had returned to the flood districts and the airdrops began.[8]

The airdrops, by today's standards, were rather crude operations. In most cases, bags of food and other supplies were simply dropped from the plane by an observer without the benefit of a parachute. "Diving at a house at a terrific rate of speed the pilot would level off his plane sufficiently for the observer to toss a package overboard," Jack C. York, post staff Correspondent, explained. It was the observer's "duty to accurately drop the bundles so that they landed directly on the housetops where refugees were." Though most drops were made while traveling at approximately 100 miles an hour, few of them reportedly missed their destination.[9]

Airdrops were also pretty risky business and on more than one occasion nearly resulted in disaster. During one of those drops, for example, a blanket struck the plane's stabilizer and another

Spreading the (ground-to-air) code words. Lieutenants W.H. McArthur (left) and I.W. Ott with special edition of Montgomery Advertiser newspaper with the Army-Red Cross message code. (USAF photo)

landed across the aircraft's tail surface and became entangled in the plane's controls. At the time, the airplane was less than 100 feet from the flood waters and headed for a groups of pine trees on a bank nearby. Kicking his rudder bar frantically, the pilot managed to get his plane to an altitude of 1,000 feet and slowly made his way back to Maxwell were he landed unharmed. In another instance, an aircraft was forced down in flood waters south of Brewton, Alabama, when it developed engine trouble. Both fliers abandoned the aircraft and swam to a nearby tree from which they were later rescued. There were also other instances in which airplanes engaged in the relief mission either "cracked up" or made forced landings, but fortunately none of the fliers were killed or seriously injured.[10]

In addition to food, clothing, and medical supplies, outboard motors were also dropped at several Alabama National Guard stations operating in the flood vicinities. Attached beneath the wings to the plane's bomb rack, the motors were wrapped in parachutes which automatically unfolded when released, allowing the motors to fall without damage. Once on the ground, guardsmen quickly attached the motors to rescue boats which were used, when water currents permitted, to ferry flood refugees to safety. In some instances, motors were delivered by airplanes which actually landed at the stations using makeshift, emergency runways. Two planes, however, were so badly damaged in the soft mud of the runways that they were unable to fly again and the practice was temporarily discontinued.[11]

The operation was closely monitored at Maxwell, the Fourth Corps Area in Atlanta, Georgia, and the War Department in Washington, D.C. All returning pilots and observers were required to provide Major Weaver a written report of their observations and any panel signals or radio messages obtained while in the flood zones. In addition, a chart with the name of each air crew and the routes they were flying was maintained at Maxwell so that Major Weaver could direct aerial operations and, almost to the minute, keep tabs on the location and movement of his men as they traveled to and from the field.

This information was then relayed to the Fourth Corps Area and subsequently to the War Department where the relief operations were being followed closely and with great interest. The system was reportedly "one of the most efficacious ever devised in relief work" as it permitted all levels of command to measure "the exact pulse of the situation."12

The Pace Accelerates

By noon on 15 March six additional airplanes with pilots and observers from the 106th Observation Squadron of the Alabama National Guard (Roberts Field, AL) had reported to Maxwell. They immediately joined in the mission, greatly accelerating the relief effort. Almost as fast as the Red Cross could deliver supplies to the field, planes roared away with them en route to the inundated cities. By dusk, 34 round-trip missions had been flown to the flood districts and tons of food and other supplies had been dropped.[13]

Though flying activities ended at dusk on 15 March, work at the field continued throughout the night. In addition to making preparations for the next day, many of the men were still required to perform their regular jobs. "Officers with responsible post jobs accomplished their six to eight hours in the air for the relief of flood sufferers, came in, grabbed a bite to eat and went to their desk to bring routine duties up to date," one report noted. "It was the rule rather than the exception to see officers working night after night to accomplish their regular work after a hard day in the

An outboard motor swaddled in burlap sacks and attached to a parachute is ready for drop and attachment to relief boats in the flood zone. (USAF photo)

Maxwell Field soldiers load supplies (mattresses?) aboard a Douglas aircraft for flight to the flooded area. (USAF photo)

Sack brigade of Maxwell Field soldiers and supplies being loaded aboard a Douglas C-1 for delivery to the flood areas. (USAF photo)

air." In fact, on several occasions during the emergency some Maxwell personnel went as long as 48 hours without sleep.[14]

Operations resumed early on the morning of 16 March, with an even greater sense of urgency and increasing national attention. During the night the flood waters had continued to rise, further complicating an already critical situation. "Five thousand persons are hanging on the highest roofs in Geneva...for their lives, while swirling waters...have submerged all one-story buildings and cut wide torrents across the town," the *San Antonio Light* reported.[15] Nearby, some 2,000 people were also reportedly "clinging to housetops in Elba proper" and some 700 to 1000 additional persons marooned by flood waters were found on an island north of the city." The conditions on the island were extremely critical; the *Atlanta Constitution* reported, "the people were clustered on rooftops and some of them were perched in trees while the high waters literally lapped at their feet." Newspapers in nearly every major city carried similar stories of the flood and of the plight of its victims.[16]

Reinforcements Arrive

Other military units joined the relief effort on 16 March. Battery F of the 141st Field Artillery of Troy, Alabama, began a rescue mission that day in four large boats destined for Elba, but the men were unable to reach the town due to the swift currents of the Pea River. Coast Guard units from Biloxi, Mississippi, and Santa Rosa and Freeport, Florida, also arrived on the scene and began assisting in the search for victims. In addition, 20 seaplanes from the Naval Air Station in Pensacola Florida, began dropping foodstuffs at Brewton and Flomaton, Alabama. With the planes from Maxwell leading the way, representatives from virtually every branch of the military's active reserve forces were in some way or another participating in the flood relief mission during the second day of operations.[17]

Later that day, supplies were dropped for the first time at rescue camps set up by the Alabama National Guard in the nearby towns of Hartford, Slacum, and Sampson. Through the use of boats, almost the entire population of some cities had been moved from the flood waters to these nearby camps. Sanitary conditions at the camps, however, were bad and precautions were required to avoid the outbreak of disease. It was necessary to drop increasingly large quantities of typhoid antitoxin to immunize flood victims against this dreaded disease, which many feared would reach epidemic proportions due to the polluted flood waters. Including the drops made at the rescue camps, a total of 42 missions had been flown by the end of the second day in what the local press was calling "missions of mercy."[18]

At the crack of dawn on the third day, 17 March, airplanes in a steady stream were once again on their way to the flood zones. By 1000, nine more planes from the 2nd Bombardment Group, Langley Field, Virginia, arrived at Maxwell and joined in the flood relief mission. In addition, Ralph Montee, Chief Pilot of the Naturaline Company of America, arrived about four hours later in a Buhl Air Sedan and volunteered the use of his plane in the relief work. At one point during the day, 21 planes were in the air carrying cargo to the flooded areas before completing 59 round trip missions by nightfall.[19]

Evaluating the Situation

With the situation stabilizing somewhat on the morning of 18 March, Major Weaver and 1st Lt. W.B. McCoy left Maxwell Field in a plane to survey the Brewton, Geneva, and Elba sections. Upon his return, Major Weaver told Governor Graves "that he saw people hanging destitute in trees in Lowndes County in an area over which the flood waters from the swollen river had spread to a great width." He also explained that it was impossible at that time to determine the extend of the loss of life or the damage done until a more complete survey was made.[20]

That afternoon the Governor also decided to get a first hand look at the flood and the havoc it had caused. Accompanied by Charles G. Moffet, President of the State Board of Administration, and Major Weaver, he flew over approximately 300 miles of the areas affected by the flood. The flight was made in a civilian

Flood waters reached the second stories of houses in Elba, Alabama during the great flood of 1929. Disease and hunger were defeated by aerial relief missions flown by Maxwell Field and other aircrews and aircraft (USAF photo)

aircraft and lasted about three hours. Upon returning to Maxwell, the Governor wore an expression of deep worry and concern as he stepped from the airplane. Official estimates at the time indicated 17 confirmed deaths, hundreds of estimated deaths, and damages of $30 million. Forecasts indicating more rain and the Alabama River rising to a crest of 56 feet gave the Governor even more cause for alarm.21

Meanwhile, the airdrops continued. Thirteen more airplanes were added to the Maxwell fleet with the arrival of nine more aircraft from Langley Field and four from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, bringing the total number of planes participating in the relief mission to 38 and increasing the number of round trips to 76, the highest flown since the operation began.[22]

Yet there was still cause for concern. Though the centers of population in the flood-swept areas were receiving sufficient aid, the situation outside the cities and towns was still acute. There also remained concern that many isolated areas had not been found and that their victims were still suffering. For example, on 18 March, four days after the relief efforts began, a group of individuals in dire need were discovered marooned on knolls and hilltops near Brewton, Alabama. Civilian and military officials feared that many other groups in the countryside had been missed in spite of the Air Corps' efforts to survey every square foot of the inundated territory.[23]

Winning the Fight

Those fears ended, however, on 19 March, when the forecast rains did not come and the waters began receding. For the first time since the operations were started, the number of relief missions was reduced and flights to the flooded areas were limited to direct requests for aid. Though 70 round-trip missions were flown that day, reports indicated that everything was "in good shape and the emergency was over." Operations were halted just before dusk that evening.[24] But for five days, from 15 March to 19 March, the grueling mission had been conducted from sunup to sundown with an intensity characteristic of a combat campaign. Nearly 40 airplanes had been used in the operation, including PT-1s, 02-Hs, O-17s, O-11s, A-3s, a C-1, and a Buhl Air Sedan. With the exception of the C-1 Douglas Transport, none of the airplanes were designed to carry freight. Altogether, they had flown a total of 281 separate missions, dropped more than 50 tons of supplies, and chalked up more than 600 hours of flying. Twelve thousand gallons of gasoline and 900 gallons of oil were also used. Based on an average estimated cost of $75 an hour to operate a plane, the five days of relief work had cost the government approximately $45,000.[25]

State losses during the five-day ordeal were devastating. Eleven lives were lost, hundreds had been injured, and thousands had been left homeless. Damage to farms and private property totaled approximately $10,000,000. In addition, agriculture losses from the flood were estimated at nearly $800,000 and livestock losses exceeded $1,000,000. Similarly, the cost for repairing state roads, bridges, and railways was expected to cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Beyond all doubt, the flood had been the worst and most costly in the history of the state.[26]

Assessing the Effort

The cost to the Air Corps, however, was small when compared to the respect and admiration the military had obtained from the

Ready to survey the flood relief scene, Gov. Bibb Graves (second from left) and his party pose for a photo before boarding an aircraft with Maj. Walter Weaver. From left to right, the survey party included Ralph Montee, Governor Graves, Maj. Weaver, Mrs. Graves, Charles Moffett, and Mrs. Weaver. (USAF photo)

American public in general and Alabamians in particular. "It was a case where opportunity was presented to the military branches to be of service and they seized it with an avidity and courage and foresight which have won them a new place in the hearts of the people of the state," the *Journal* reported.

"Too often the thoughtless connect the military branches of our government only with war and armed conflict. Peace advocates attempt to handicap and discourage these branches of the national and state governments. They fail to reflect that well organized and equipped military bodies can be of even greater service in peaceful emergencies than in emergencies of armed disorder or conflict. The very fact that they are organized and highly trained to meet unforeseen conditions makes them of inestimable value and importance. Unorganized and unequipped civilians could never have accomplished so expeditiously what has been accomplished by the federal air forces and state guardsmen during the disaster which has overtaken South Alabama."[27]

The effort also received praise and recognition from the War Department. During a visit to the installation on 3 April 1929, Gen. James E. Fechet, Chief of the Air Corps, stated that Maxwell had performed a great service in furnishing temporary relief to the Alabama flood sufferers. "I was very pleased with the work of the post in the flood," General Fechet said, and he added that although "it was not the first time the Air Corps had engaged in flood relief work, it was the largest single operation of that nature up to that time. In a letter to Major Weaver on 1 May 1929, Brig. Gen. Benjamin D. Foulois, Assistant Chief of the Air Corps, echoed similar sentiments; "Your initiative and promptness in this emergency, as well as that of the officers directly connected with this work, has brought credit to yourself and the Air Corps."[28]

In the final analysis, Maxwell had once again reserved a place for itself in the annals of aviation history. Though airplanes were involved in the Mississippi and New England floods two years earlier, they were used primarily for communication and photographic purposes.[29] Never before had the airplane been involved in such a massive effort to carry food and supplies to thousands of distressed people in areas which could have otherwise remained inaccessible for days. The Alabama flood relief mission of 1929 was the first large-scale effort to airlift and drop food and supplies during a major civilian emergency.[30] More importantly, it established a precedent for a peacetime role that the Air Force would be called upon to play on many more occasions in the future.

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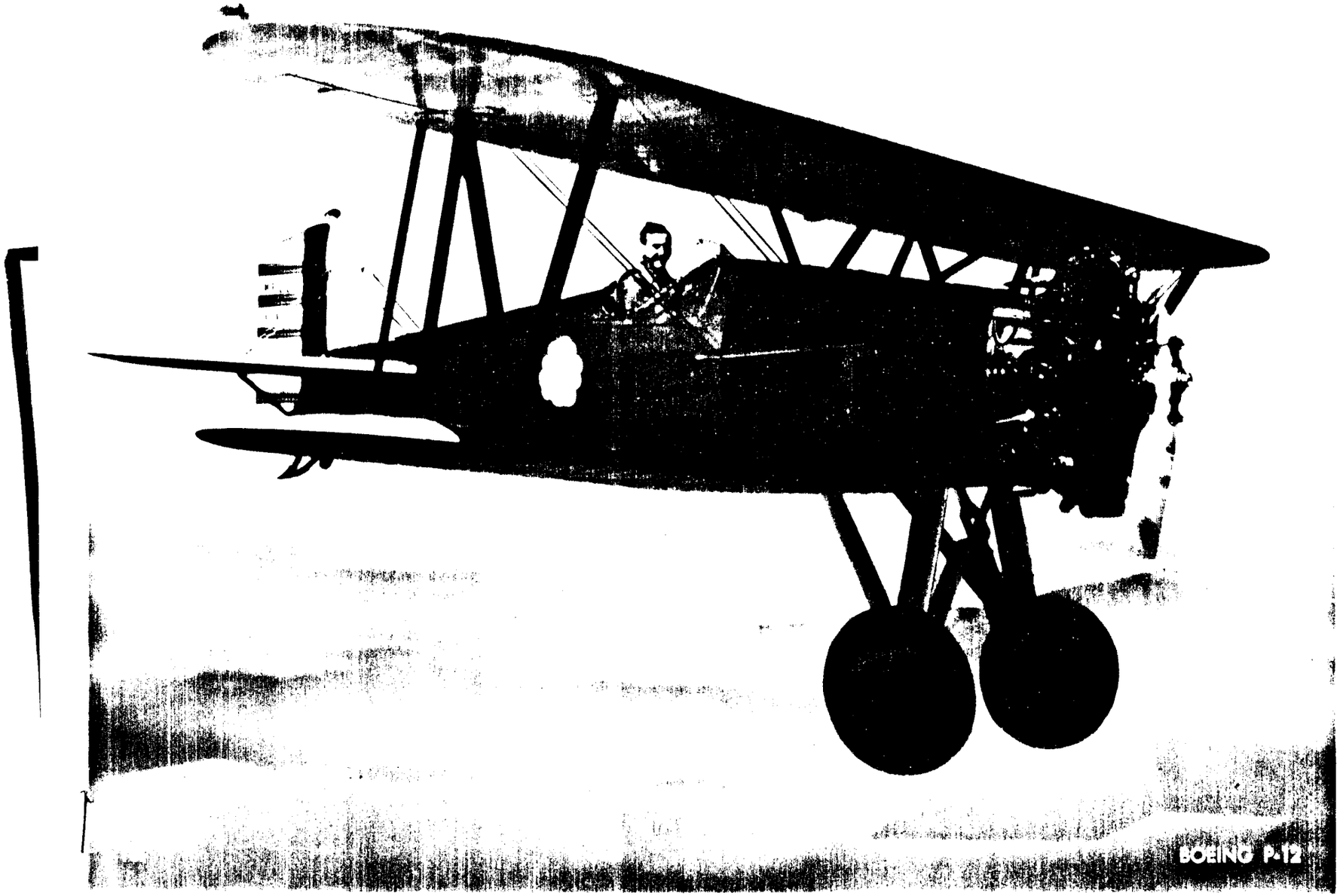
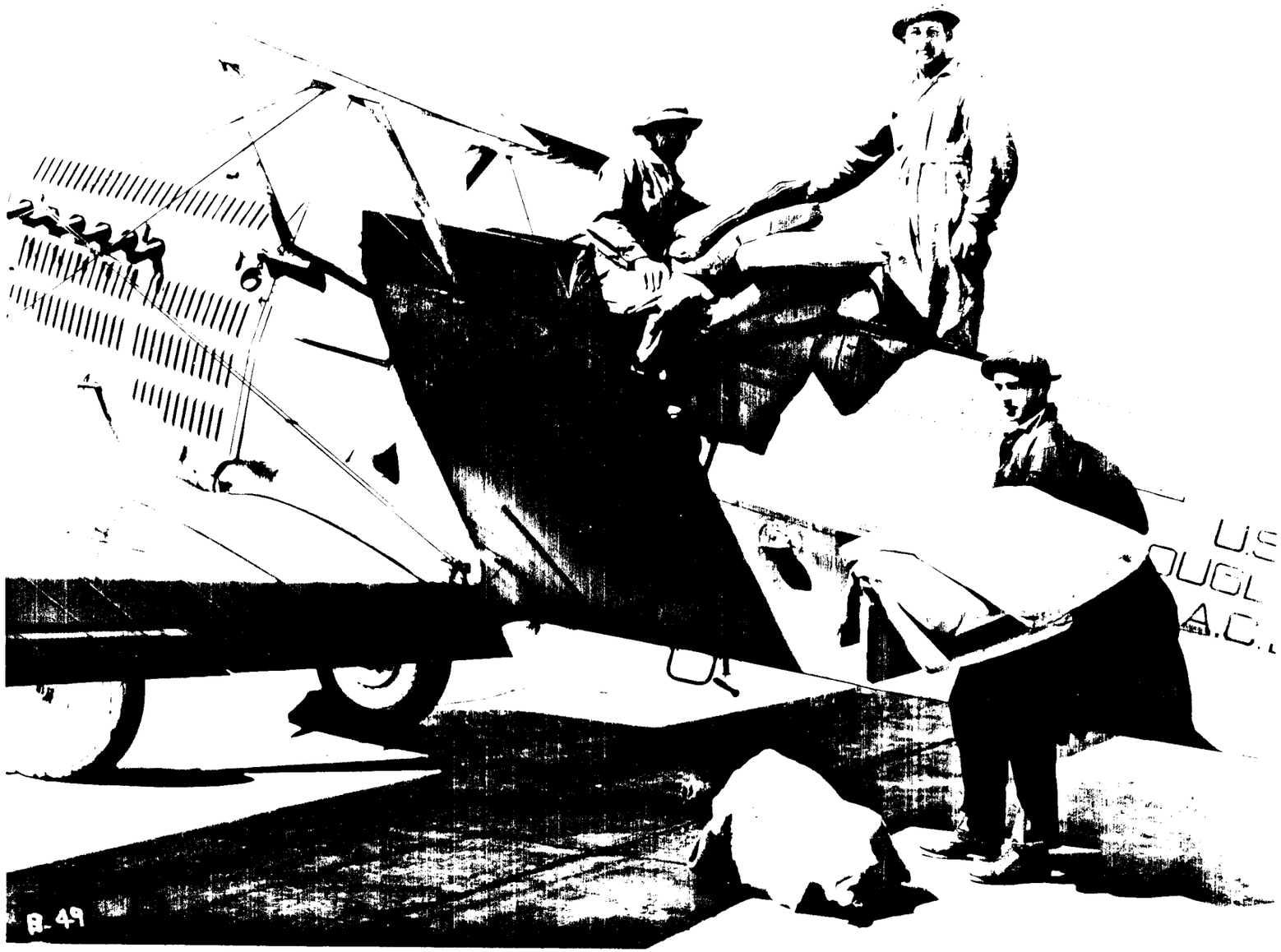
1. *Montgomery Advertiser,* 14 Mar. 1929, 3; *Montgomery Advertiser,* 15 Mar. 1929, 1.
2. Extracts from Official Report on Flood Relief, by the 4th Division, Aviation, Maxwell Field, Montgomery, AL, 14-20 Mar. 1929, in Maxwell Field (Montgomery, 1929), 53-67 (hereinafter cited as *Official Report*).
3. *Montgomery Advertiser,* 15 Mar. 1929, 1.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Official Report,* 53.
6. Angus A. Acree, "26 Planes Rush 50 Tons of Food and Relief Supplies to Alabama's Flood Victims," in Maxwell Field Scrapbook (1929-1930), 30.
7. *Ibid.; Official Report,* 54-55.
8. *Montgomery Advertiser,* 18 Mar. 1929, 4. The code was developed by Brig. Gen Benjamin D. Foulois and used in the New England Flood relief mission of 1927. It was subsequently adopted by the Red Cross.
9. Jack C. York, "Planes Leading Relief Worker," *Birmingham Post,* 18 Mar. 1929, 2.
10. *Ibid.; Montgomery Advertiser,* 20 Mar. 1929, 3.
11. *Montgomery Advertiser,* 18 Mar. 1929, 9; *Birmingham Post* 19 Mar. 1929, 13; Joseph C. McCoy, "Flood Stricken Refugees Send Up Fervent Prayer 'God Bless You' As Aviators of Maxwell Work Untiringly On Relief," *Montgomery Advertiser,* 18 Mar. 1929, 1.
12. *Alabama Journal,* 18 Mar. 1929, 1 and 3.
13. *Official Report,* 57.
14. *Ibid.,* 61; *Montgomery Advertiser,* 19 Mar. 1929, 2.
15. *San Antonio Light,* 17 Mar. 1929, 1.
16. Atlanta Constitution, 18 Mar. 1929, 1.
17. *Montgomery Advertiser,* 16 Mar. 1929, 1; *Montgomery Advertiser,* 16 Mar. 1929, 11.
18. Angus Acree, "Planes Sweep Area Carrying Aid to Victims," *Sunday American,* 17 Mar. 1929, 1; *Montgomery Advertiser,* 18 Mar. 1929, 1.
19. *Official Report,* 57.
20. George N. Dubina, *Chronology of Maxwell Field* (AU/HO Study 1, Maxwell AFB, AL, 1964), 92; *Alabama Journal,* 18 Mar. 1929, 1.
21. *Montgomery Advertiser,* 19 Mar. 1929, 2. The overflowing of the Alabama River had already caused hundreds of people to evacuate north Montgomery and parts of Wetumpka, Alabama, a town located about 16 miles north of the capital. Areas along the northern sections of the Alabama River, however, were not as severely affected as those in the southernmost portion of the state.
22. *Ibid.,* 3.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Montgomery Advertiser,* 20 Mar. 1929, 2.
25. Acree, *Army Planes,* 30.
26. *Montgomery Advertiser,* 22 Mar. 1929, 1; *Montgomery Advertiser,* 31 Mar. 1929, 1.
27. *Alabama Journal,* 19 Mar. 1929, 6.
28. *Official Report,* 67; *Montgomery Advertiser,* 4 Apr. 1929, 1.
29. *New York Times,* 5 Nov. 1927,1; *New York Times,* 24 Oct. 1927, 38. Over 200 lives were lost in the New England flood that took place during November 1927, with damages costing the states of Vermont, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut and New York nearly $50,000,000. Earlier that same year, flood destruction in Mississippi totaled nearly $46,000,000 in property damages (2,725 homes were destroyed and 22,940 others were damaged), $1,000,000 in livestock losses, and $400,000 in damages to highways and bridges.
30. *Alabama Journal,* 18 Mar. 1929, 6; *New York Times,* 14 Apr. 1929, xi-15.

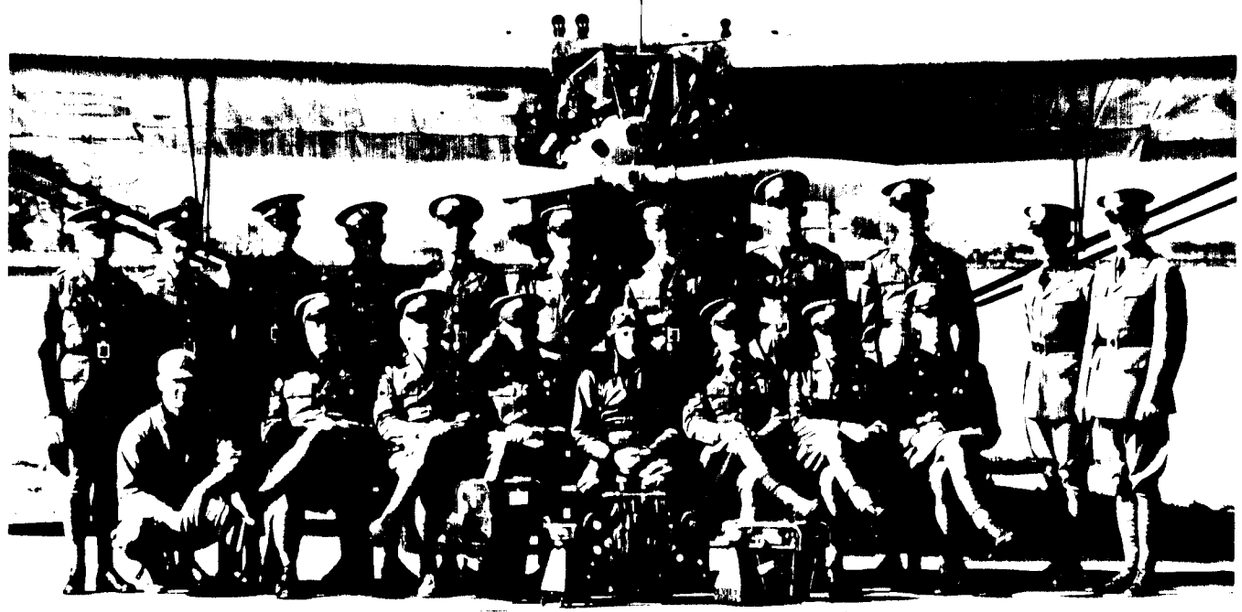


U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO

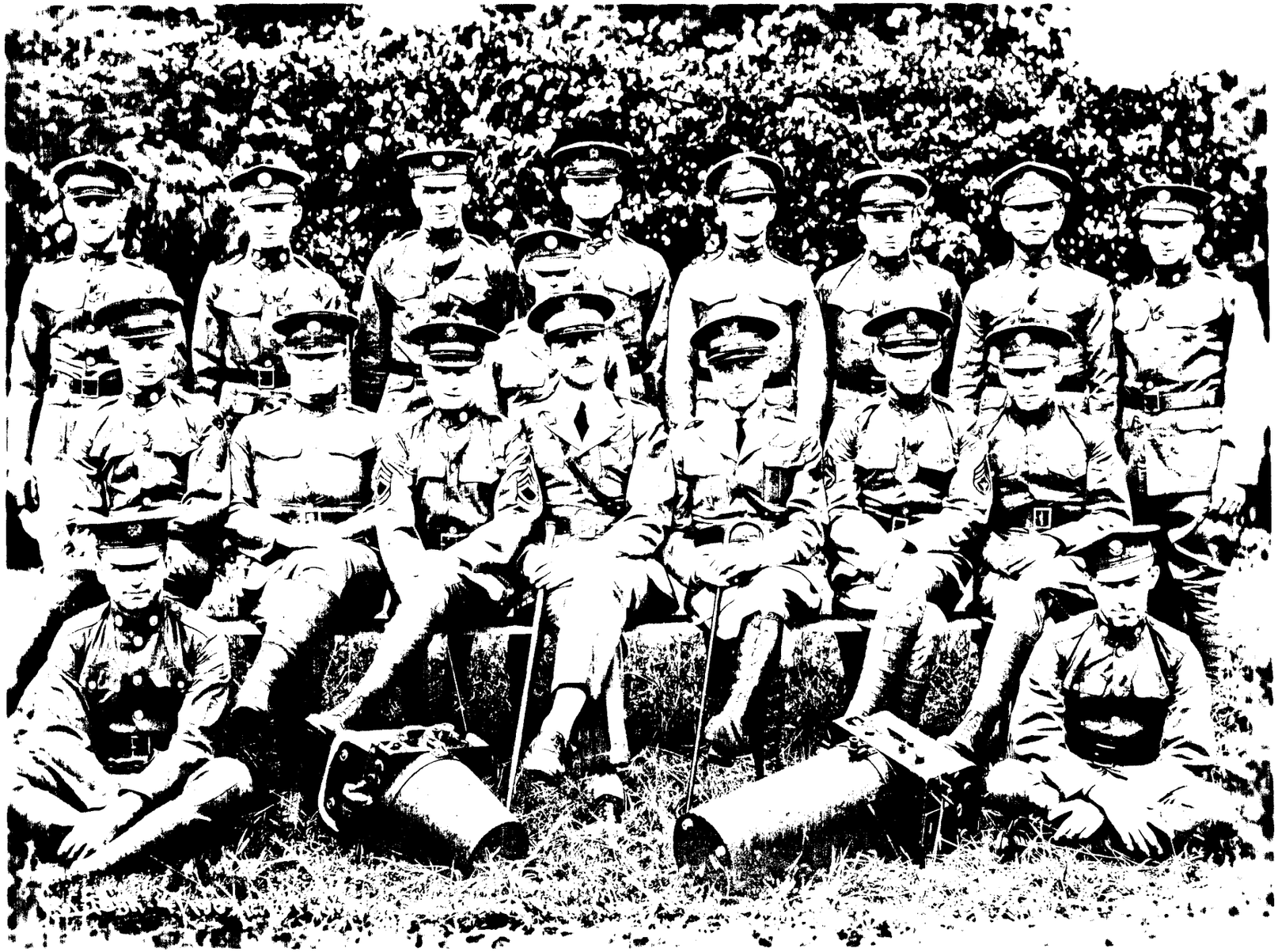


Maxwell Field LOADING C2H 3-11-1929
LOADING FOOD AND SUPPLIES FOR FLOOD RELIEF

4th Photo Section
A.R. CORPS



Personnel of 4th Photo Section
Maxwell Field
Capt. J.G. Pratt Commanding



QUALITY COFFEE
QUALITY COFFEE

First Technical Order Modification
Installation of Bucket Type Seats for use With
Seat Type Parachute, on OH-43.

THE MAXWELL TIME CAPSULE: OPEN IN THE YEAR 2043

By MAJOR NICK P. APPLE

Twenty-four Liberator bombers flew over Maxwell Field on December 29, 1943 as the final echelons of Army Air Forces cadets marched past the reviewing stand erected to the left of the two-ton marble monument. A few minutes before, a U.S. senator had pulled the covering from the stone and had handed a time capsule to a justice of the Alabama Supreme Court who had been a friend of Orville Wright.

The justice then placed the capsule in the back of the monument and sealed it in place with mortar while Movietone News filmed the event. Twenty-seven years after the elaborate ceremonies of 1943, the time capsule and the accompanying activities have all but been forgotten.

Visitors today at Maxwell AFB, Montgomery, Ala., can inspect the five-foot monument located on the west side of the base operations building. Standing in front of the white marble, visitors can read this inscription:

1910-1943

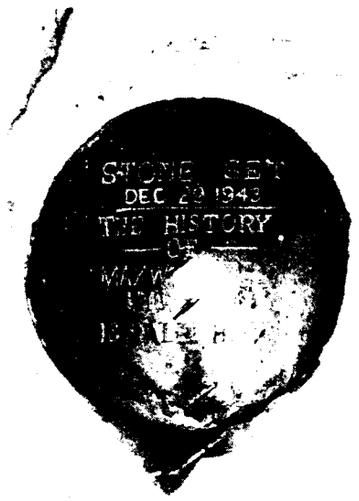
THIS STONE TO MARK THE AIRDROME EXPANSION AT MAXWELL FIELD, COMPLETED 1 DECEMBER 1943, MUST ENDURE IN HONOR OF ORVILLE WRIGHT WHO FLEW HERE ON 26 MARCH 1910 AND LIEUT. WM. C. MAXWELL FOR WHOM THIS POST IS NAMED AND ALL MEN WHO FLY FOR FREEDOM, THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.

In letters one and one-quarter inches high, the inscription covers an area approximately 29 by 28 inches. The few curious visitors who walk around the bushes flanking the stone find a three-inch copper disc imbedded in the rough marble facing base operations. An inscription on the disc reads:

STONE SET
DEC. 29, 1943

THE HISTORY
OF
MAXWELL FIELD
1910—1943
IS SEALED HEREIN

Historical records maintained at Air University, which inherited Maxwell Field at the end of WW II, indicate that Col. Thomas M. (Paul) Todd ordered the "history to be sealed and opened in 100 years." The history was compiled by the Maxwell section of the AAF Historical Division with an annex written by Dr. Peter A. Brannon, director of the Alabama Department of Archives and History. After unveiling the stone, Senator Lister Hill gave the time capsule—which had been manufactured by the 68th Sub-Depot of the Air Service Command—to Associate Justice William H. Thomas, who deposited the capsule in the stone for a future generation to read.



Inscription covering time capsule sealed into two-ton marble monument at Maxwell Field.

Among the witnesses were three brothers of 1st Lt. William C. Maxwell and Aviation Cadet Spence C. Crane Jr., whose father had been one of Orville Wright's first three flying students in Montgomery.

The history sealed in the time capsule began seven years after the Wright brothers' first flight at Kitty Hawk, when Wilbur toured the South in search of a year-round flying field. After visiting Augusta and Atlanta, as well as several places in Florida, Wilbur went to Montgomery on February 20, 1910. He found the Kohn plantation near the Alabama River, and three miles from town, acceptable and proposed bringing one of his aircraft and several students to Montgomery.

The Wright aircraft was subsequently shipped from Cincinnati, arriving in mid-March. Mechanic C. E. Taylor and students W. R. Brookins and J. W. Davis assembled the "great mechanical bird." It would hopefully develop 25 to 35 horsepower and carry sufficient gasoline to drive two pusher propellers for approximately four hours of flight. Before the first flight could be made, however, a 200-foot monorail runway had to be constructed. Then on March 26, Or-

Tracy Apple examines stone erected to memory of Orville Wright and Lt. William C. Maxwell at Maxwell Field, 29 December 1943.

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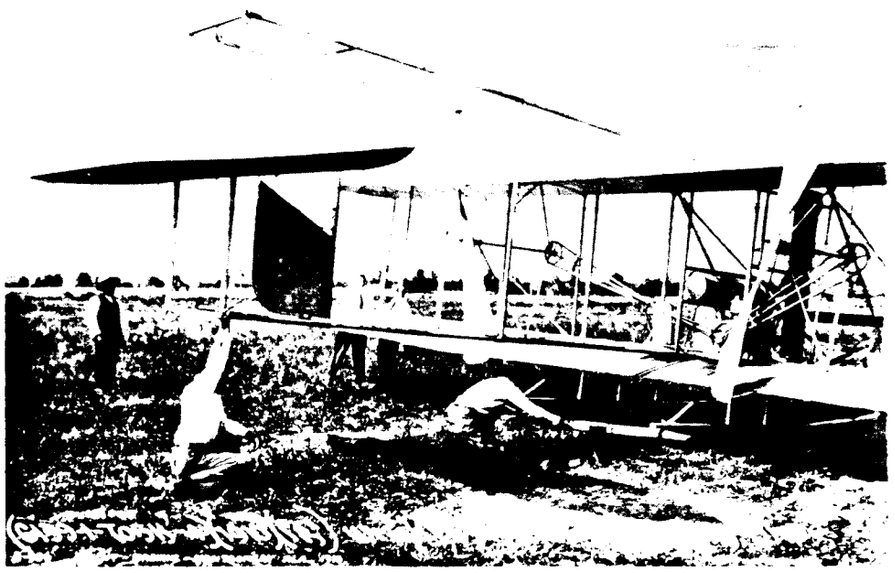
ville Wright made his first flights in Montgomery over what is now Maxwell AFB. During two solo flights of approximately five minutes each, he never exceeded an altitude of 50 feet.

"A strange new bird soared over cotton fields to the west of Montgomery Saturday afternoon," the local press announced. "It was the graceful aeroplane of Orville Wright, guided by the hand of the pioneer of the skies himself. The big biplane took to the air, ascending in a long, graceful curve. Under perfect control it followed the hand of Orville Wright, turning, ascending, descending at his bidding." He later told the press that "aeroplane sailing is not all mere manipulation of the engine. There is judgement of currents to be taken, balancing to be gauged, and the many intricacies of piloting that will come only with practice." When asked about the eventual use of the airplane outside of war operations and government use, Orville Wright replied it would be used "to carry mail between certain points, for quick journeys in place of a special train, and for personal recreation." He discontinued the school in the summer of 1910.

The Wright flying field later acquired the name "Maxwell," which comes from the Latin word meaning "leader." The Air Force installation at Montgomery, which does prepare Air Force leaders, is named in honor of Lieutenant William Calvin Maxwell, who was born in Natchez, Alabama, but who grew up in Atmore, Alabama. He was killed in an aircraft crash in the Philippines on August 12, 1910. During an emergency landing, he flew his aircraft into a plantation flagpole to avoid striking a group of children. Montgomery Air Intermediate Depot was renamed Maxwell Field on November 8, 1922. General Order Number 45, which designated the change, carried the signature element of "John J. Pershing, General of the Armies, Chief of Staff." The order was dated one day before what would have been Lieutenant Maxwell's 30th birthday.

The ceremonies at Maxwell Field on December 29, 1943, were held to dedicate extensive new facilities, including runways for the Consolidated B-24 Liberators. In the year before, condemnation proceedings had acquired approximately 1000 additional acres of land for the expanded airdrome and for the relocation of a highway and railroad. Senator Lister Hill, the principal speaker at the dedication, termed Maxwell Field a "hallowed ground," named for an American who "gave his life for our country." "From its soil," Senator Hill continues, "have gone many others like unto him who have given their lives that we might continue free. As we dedicate this great addition to Maxwell Field, let us also dedicate ourselves that we may be worthy of these heroes and of these splendid young Americans who are gathered with us today and who shall go forth to fight for our country in the spirit of these heroes. With faith in ourselves, with faith in America, with faith in the God of our fathers, let us resolve that we will do our full part each and every day in the winning of the war in the shortest possible time."



Orville Wright flew his pusher areoplane in Montgomery for the first time on 26 March 1910.

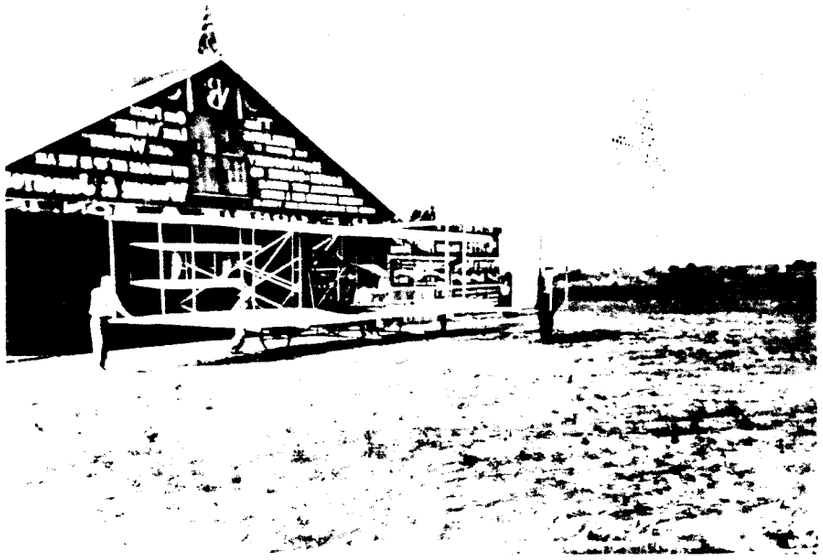
Maxwell compiled an impressive record during WW II. Its training program produced more than 100,000 aviation cadets—pilots, navigators and bombardiers. Its 2653 Liberator crews flew 165,544 hours and made 230,720 landings in the B-24 transitional school. And its 728 B-29 crews flew 46,554 hours and made 112,809 landings without one major accident. At the time of the dedication ceremony, Maxwell also housed headquarters of the Eastern Flying Training Command. Its 29 major stations were scattered from Ohio to Florida and from South Carolina to Arkansas.

In his dedication talk Senator Hill, who has since retired, linked the future of Maxwell Field with the post-WW II establishment of a world organization. He said, "We may know that the Army Air Forces will have a leading and important place in any international force that may be established, and Maxwell Field with its great investment of millions of dollars in the field, will continue one of the key centers and most vital installations in the Army Air Forces."

His prophecy of Maxwell's future importance began to materialize when Air University was established at Maxwell on March 12, 1946. The major air command has since developed into a complex of military schools and educational services, serving as the intellectual heart of American aerospace power. Briefly, Air University provides the Air Force with its future top leaders, best staff officers and trained specialists so that the Air Force can meet its challenging commitments at home and abroad.

Alabama's senior senator was introduced at the dedication by Maj. Gen. Thomas J. Hanley Jr., commanding general of the AAF Eastern Flying Training Command. In his introduction, General Hanley said the relocation of the Air Corps Tactical School at Maxwell in the summer of 1931 was an important acquisition. He mentioned Chennault, Eaker, Spaatz, Emmons, Echols, Stratemeyer and Kenney—key Air Force generals of WW II—were graduates of the old "Tac" school at Maxwell or the school at Langley Field, Va., where it had been located since October 10, 1920. The outbreak of war in Europe sealed the fate of the Air Corps Tactical School and it was closed on June 13, 1940. Having adoped the "Tac" school's coat of arms as its official command emblem, Air University perpetuates the memory of the Air Corps Tactical School.

Col. Elmer J. Bowling, base commander, introduced W. C. Bowman, president of the Montgomery Chamber of Commerce and chairman of the Citizen's Participting Committee for the ceremonies. Bowman presented



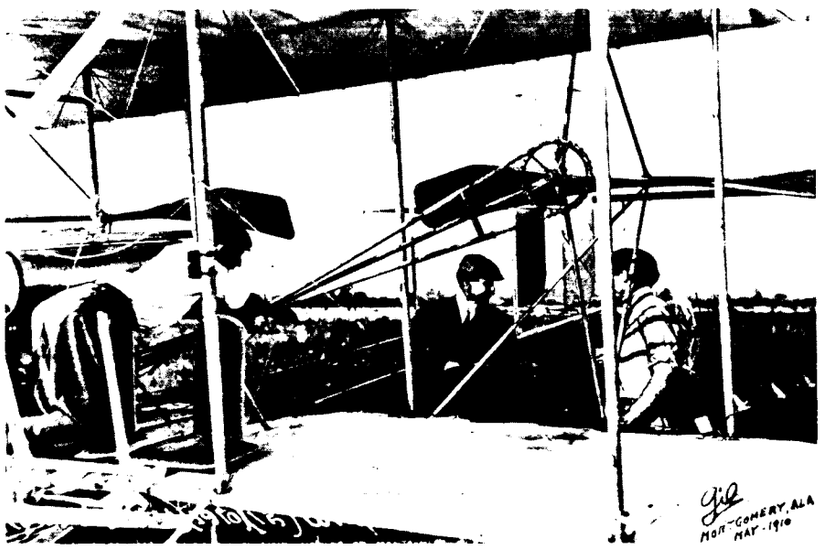
A Montgomery merchant advertised "Wright prices" on the hangar used by Orville Wright at what is now Maxwell AFB. This photograph of an "early Wright machine" was taken in 1910.

the marble monument, obtained from Sylacauga, Ala., to Maxwell Field as a gift from the Chamber. Other guests who were introduced that day included the three Maxwell brothers (J. N. of Beatrice, Ala., J. F. of Atmore, Ala., and W. O. Roscoe of Punta Gorda, Fla.), Chief Justice L. D. Gardner of the Alabama Supreme Court, Congressman George Grant, Montgomery Mayor Cyrus K. Brown, and L. R. Grimes, vice-president of the Montgomery County Board of Revenue.

The B-24 flight that day was under the direction of Lt. Col. Maurice R. Lemon, director of the AAF Pilot School (Specialized Four-Engine.) The aviation cadet review (in almost divisional strength) was under the supervision of Lt. Col. Charles R. Cross, director of the Pre-Flight School (Pilot). Majors Edward L. Van Allen and Joe R. Daniel, unit group commanders, led the 24 Liberators which passed over the parade in elements of three.

The history of Maxwell Air Force Base since then has changed from flying to education. Perhaps, someday, one or more capsules bearing the updated history of Maxwell will also be sealed in that two-ton marble monument. When the capsules are opened in the year 2043 they will reveal to a new generation the significant contributions made to U.S. aerospace power at Maxwell Air Force Base.

Orville Wright and student pilot W. R. Brookins were the only two persons identified in this 1910 photograph. Two men on the right were not named in the original caption.

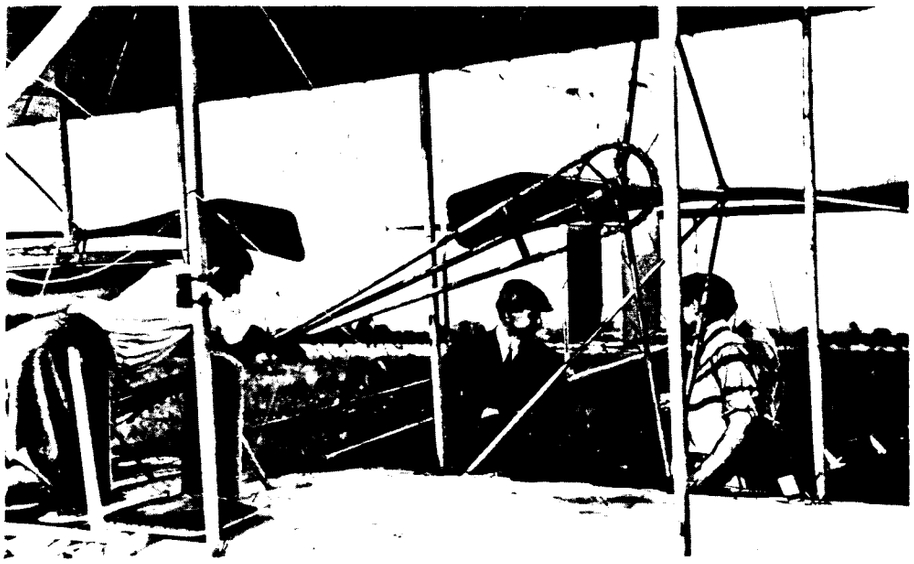


MAID float in Montgomery's 1921 Armistice Day parade. Note the 22nd Observation Squadron insignia.

The Military, Montgomery, and Maxwell

by John H. Napier III

Saturday morning inspection with full packs and sidearms, 22nd Observation Squadron, Maxwell Field, 1923.



Orville Wright and a Wright Flyer at his civilian flying school, Kohn Plantation, Montgomery, AL, 1910.

THERE is a symbiosis between Montgomery, Alabama, and Maxwell Air Force Base. Both the city and the military installation were named for military heroes, albeit more than a century apart, and the tradition lingers.

When Montgomery Jaycees recently staged a contest to name their new riverboat, the name they chose was the *General Richard Montgomery*. When military men at Maxwell retire from active duty, they tend to "hang up their suits" in Montgomery. There may be more retired military living in the Montgomery metropolitan area than there are active duty people stationed at Maxwell AFB and Gunter AFS.

Montgomery, the cradle of the Confederacy, and Maxwell, home of Air University, are on the edge of the fertile Black Belt, overlooking the Alabama River as it flows to the Gulf of Mexico. Location made Montgomery, and climate made Maxwell. The town was established because it lay between the Alabama River and the Old Federal Road. And Maxwell was established because of good flying weather in this region. But it wasn't named Maxwell when the first Western military men came this way and recorded its site in history. There was an Alabama Indian village named Tawasa there, where Hernando de Soto and his Spanish military expedition encamped the week of 6-13 September 1540. A "gentleman with the army" recorded the Spaniards' stay and the fact that the local chief gave the visitors some 30 Indian women and carriers, supposedly in exchange for 30 knives and 30 mirrors.[1]

Alabama archaeologists place the site of Tawasa near Maxwell "officers' country," where the east golf course, officers' mess, and senior officers' quarters overlook the Alabama River. Tristan de Luna's soldiers may have visited Tawasa in 1559 when they came upriver from their Gulf Coast settlement foraging for supplies.[2] Otherwise, the Alabama River country faded from history for nearly 150 years.

In 1930, the Alabama Society of Colonial Dames dedicated a marker commemorating de Soto's sojourn at Tawasa, but had to place it outside the Maxwell reservation, where the old Birmingham and Selma highways forked. On the 435th anniversary of de Soto's arrival, 45 years later, Air University and the Colonial Dames rededicated the marker, moved to its rightful place, on base near the river bluff, next to the eighth tee of Maxwell's east golf course.[3]

During the late 17th century the Alabama River headwaters became a focus for three rival European imperial thrusts. Spain was ensconced in Florida to safeguard the passage of her Plate Fleet from Mexico to the homeland. England was pushing down the Atlantic Seaboard to found Carolina in 1670, and then Georgia, in 1733, as a military outpost. And France decided to make good her claims to the Mississippi River Valley by founding Louisiana in 1699.

The three outposts of empire encroached on each other in the Southeast in Creek Indian country; at the Spaniards' Fort Apalachicola, up that river from Florida's Gulf Coast; at "an English military outpost of sorts" at Okfuskee on the Tallapoosa River, near present-day Dadeville, AL;[4] and at the French Fort Toulouse, planted near the juncture of the Tallapoosa and Coosa Rivers which form the Alabama, just above present-day Montgomery.

As early as 1685, British traders, many of them Scots, had penetrated into the Alabama country, finding native markets and mistresses. Later half-breed chiefs bore such un-Indian patronymics as McGillivray and McQueen.

Louisiana Governor de l'Epinay reacted to the British challenge. He sent Lieutenant de la Tour Vitral with 20 soldiers in the summer of 1717 up the Alabama River past Tawasa to found this post, Fort des Alibamons, later Fort Toulouse. They barely beat British Army Colonel Hastings' rival expedition from Carolina by a month to the strategic river forks.[5] The Alabama country saw its first military garrison, one that stayed nearly 50 years.

After the Treaty of Paris of 1763 ceded Louisiana east of the Mississippi River to Great Britain, Fort Toulouse's troops spiked their cannon and retired downriver to Mobile and sailed out of our sight.

However, because the Creeks opposed it, Colonel Robertson, the new British Commandant of Mobile did not occupy Fort Toulouse, and it fell quickly into ruin. James Germany, designated by Robertson as the fort's caretaker, soon spent most of his time in the home he built on the site of Montgomery.[6] The only British military presence was that of the Crown's Indian Agent to the Creeks, who seems always to have been a British Army officer.

The last of these officers was Col. John Tate, who married a half-Indian, Sehoya McPherson, later the mother of William Weatherford, the celebrated Creek war leader. When England's 13 seaboard colonies revolted against the Crown, Colonel Tate raised a troop of Indian warriors and drilled them at Ecanchatty, the Indian vil

lage on the site of Montgomery. He took them to Georgia to reinforce the Tories besieging Augusta, but became deranged and died, and his campaign petered out.[7] This was the only Revolutionary War activity on the local scene.

The newly independent United States received British West Florida, of which the Alabama country was a part, in the 1783 Treaty of Paris. However, a dispute over the border with Spanish Florida and the presence of a strong Creek Nation delayed American settlement. Maj. Gen. Andrew Jackson and his American troops crushed the Creek Nation at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend on 27 March 1814 and imposed a surrender of half the Creek lands at the Treaty of Fort Jackson on 9 August 1814.[8] Fort Jackson was "Old Hickory's" post built on the site of Fort Toulouse, and U.S. troops garrisoned it until 1817 to keep the Indians in line. Then Fort Jackson also fell into ruin, but again the Alabama country had seen uniformed soldiery.

Although there was no longer a regular military garrison, American settlers pouring into Central Alabama still perceived threats from Indians and the Spanish in Florida and quickly formed local military companies. Montgomery County was named in 1817 for Maj. Lemuel P. Montgomery, who had fallen at Horseshoe Bend, and in 1819 the newly established town of Montgomery was named for Gen. Richard Montgomery, Revolutionary War hero killed at Quebec in 1775. The frontier town soon had its first military company, the Montgomery Light Infantry. Other units formed in the course of the years: the Montgomery Huzzars, Montgomery True Blues, Montgomery Invincibles, Montgomery Guards, Montgomery Greys, and others. Such units came and went, but at least two, the True Blues, organized in 1836, and the Greys, formed in 1860, continued in existence until after World War I. One or more local volunteer companies went off to serve in the Creek Removal, Second Seminole War, Texas War for Independence, Mexican War, War Between the States, Spanish-American War, Mexican Border Expedition, and World War I. They also were men's clubs, and some, such as the True Blues, had the reputation of representing the local *beaumonde*.[9] An examination of their scrapbooks shows their esteem of themselves and their corps.[10]

EARLY in the 1900s, aviation came to Montgomery, and soon thereafter, the military aviator was seen in World War I. Attracted by good flying weather, the Wright Brothers operated the first civilian flying school in the U.S. in 1910 on the Frank Kohn cotton plantation west of Montgomery, the site of old Tawasa.[11] The Wrights' School was there only for two months, but in World War I the War Department chose the same site for a U.S. Army flying field for the same reasons as had the Wrights: good flying weather, open terrain, and the importunities of local businessmen.

Wright Brothers' hangar, built for them by businessmen in Montgomery, 1910.

> . . .As training fields were to be established in Florida and as another site, to the East of Montgomery had also been selected as favorable for flying training it was considered necessary to provide a Repair Depot to keep these fields constantly supplied with planes and engines that training might proceed uninterrupted [sic].[12]

The U.S. Government bought 302 acres of the Kohn plantation on the Washington Ferry Road for $35,000. Starting 8 April 1918, in 90 days, the contractor finished 52 buildings, 3 miles of paved roads, power lines, water mains, and railroad access for $819,000—surely cost-effective by present standards! The field had been unofficially called Wrights' Field, but unfortunately there was already a Wilbur Wright Field at Fairfield, Ohio. The Montgomery post was named briefly Engine and Repair Depot and then Engine and Plane Repair Depot No. 3. On 17 September 1918 it became Aviation Repair Depot (or ARDMONT). After World War I, in January 1921, it became Montgomery Air International Depot

Capt. Claire Lee Chennault, Air Corps Tactical School instructor and organizer of "The Men on the Flying Trapeze" at Maxwell Field in 1922.

(MAIS), and finally, Maxwell Field on 8 November 1922.[13]

During World War I, the Montgomery depot and its three service squadrons supported six flying fields: Door and Carlstrom Fields, Florida; Souther Field, Americus, Georgia; Taylor Field, Montgomery, Alabama; Payne Field, West Point, Mississippi; and Gerstner Field, Lake Charles, Louisiana. In addition to the Air Depot and Taylor Field, Montgomery had two other Army installations. Southeast of town there was a Remount Depot for the purchase of horses and mules. North of the city was Camp Sheridan (a tactless name for a post in the Cradle of the Confederacy!) where the 37th Infantry Division of the Ohio National Guard trained for service on the Western Front. Its commanding general's aide de camp was Princetonian Lt. F. Scott Fitzgerald. There he wooed and won a Southern belle, Zelda Sayre, daughter of one of Montgomery's first families. Romances between military beaux and Montgomery belles have been frequent down to the present.

After the Armistice, soldiers were replaced by civilian employees; at one time there were about 900. However, in June 1921 about 350 civilians were laid off when repair activities of the depot were transferred to the air depot at Fairfield, Ohio—Wilbur Wright Field.

The Montgomery post was nearly closed, but got a new lease on life when the 22nd Observation Squadron and 4th Photo Section were transferred there. Both units had served in France in World War I, and during the not-so-roaring Twenties at Maxwell, they supported Army infantry at Ft. Benning, Georgia, and coast artillery at Ft. Barrancas, Florida.

Besides flying observation—that is, reconnaissance missions for the ground troops—Maxwell airmen helped demonstrate the potential of aviation to their countrymen in the south. Fliers helped select airdrome sites throughout Alabama; Maxwell commander Maj. Roy S. Brown flew in the Birmingham air race in 1924; Lt. Robert D. Knapp flew the first airmail out of Montgomery in April 1925; Sgt. R. E. L. Choate demonstrated to the public air-to-ground radio transmissions; parachuting exhibitions and aerial battle maneuvers were held; and relief missions were conducted in 1929 to flood-ravaged south Alabama, for which Maxwell Field received commendations from the State of Alabama and the War Department.[14] Appropriately, Maxwell had been named for a South Alabamian, 2nd Lt. William C. Maxwell of Atmore, who was killed 12 August 1920 during an emergency landing near Manila, P. I., trying to avoid hitting children playing in a field.[15]

An officer at Air Corps Tactical School, Maxwell Field, holding a K-3B camera in an O-25 in the 1930s. Note the ACTS insignia.

During the 1920s, the men at Maxwell had to live in and operate from World War I temporary buildings made in part of beaverboard. In 1925, thanks to then Congressman Lister Hill, Maxwell got its first permanent buildings authorized, which were finished in 1928. This construction helped assure that the Montgomery post would not be abandoned.[16] Hill was also instrumental in 1928 in the decision to move the Air Corps Tactical School (ACTS) from Langley Field, VA, to Maxwell.

The pre-war Golden Age of Maxwell Field began in 1931 when the ACTS opened in its new school building, Austin Hall.[17] From then until it closed in 1940, for all practical purposes, the School *was* Maxwell. Other permanent construction followed to give Maxwell the tidy look of a peacetime permanent Army post, and assigned personnel increased nine-fold, from 205 to just under 2,000. By the end of 1938, Maxwell had become a large air installation.[18] [19]

THE Tactical School was the intellectual center of the pre-World War II Army Air Corps, where brilliant young officers such as Harold L. George, Kenneth L. Walker, Robert Olds, Claire Chennault, Donald Wilson, and Muir S. Fairchild, wrote, taught, argued, and hammered out the aerial warfare doctrines and strategy that the United States would employ successfully against the Axis Powers in World War II. The school produced most of our World War II Army Air Forces (AAF) leaders. Of 320 AAF general officers serving on V-J Day, 261 were Tac School graduates, including all 3 four-star generals and 11 of the 13 lieutenant generals.[20] Also, the first generation of post-World War II U.S. Air Force leaders had been with the pre-war Tac School—USAF Chiefs of Staff Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Nathan F. Twining, Thomas D. White, Curtis E. Lemay, and John P. McConnell.[21]

> ...The outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 sealed the fate of the Air Corps Tactical School. Requirements for well-trained officers were far too great to permit...academic pursuits.[22]

Maxwell Field then began another phase of its history when it began training people to man our wartime aerial armadas. From 1940 to V-J Day, Maxwell operated several training programs. First, it became one of three major training centers within the U.S. for the AAF. The Southeast Air Corps Training Center (SEACTC) was responsible for all flying training in this part of the country. Maxwell also became the site of an advanced flying school, while the Air Corps took over Montgomery's Municipal Airport across town for a basic flying school and named it Gunter Field. Thousands of

American, British, and French flying cadets trained at the two posts.

In 1941 Maxwell received an Air Corps Replacement Center (later AAF Preflight School for Pilots), and 100 new buildings were constructed to accommodate preflight cadets. The next year Maxwell acquired SEACTC's Central Instructors School, and the Advanced Flying School moved to Albany, GA.

The Instructors School moved to Randolph Field in 1943, but Maxwell had to expand again and lengthen its runways to accommodate a hush-hush program. This became the AAF Pilot School (Specialized-Four Engine).

On 5 August 1943 the first of 2,653 pilots began crew transition training in the B-24 Liberator bomber. That summer SEACTC was renamed the AAF Eastern Flying Training Command.

In December 1944 Maxwell's Preflight School ended after having trained 100,000 cadets. The B-24 school moved to Courtland Field, AL, and it was replaced by transition training in the B-29 Superfortress, for which runways had to be lengthened again, to 7,000 feet. In all, 728 B-29 crews trained at Maxwell with no major accidents. The wartime byword in Montgomery was the "the road to Tokyo leads through Maxwell Field." Considering that B-29s dropped the atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki to end the war in the Pacific, it may not have been an idle boast.[23]

At the war's end the B-29s flew off to storage in the Texas desert. Maxwell became a separation center to discharge AAF personnel living within 300 miles of Montgomery.

However, AAF planners were already working on Maxwell's next and last military incarnation.[24] Looking to the future and to the prospect of an independent U.S. Air Force, they wanted to establish one professional military educational center to take the place of the parent U.S. Army's Command and Staff and War Colleges, and in the tradition of the pre-war Air Corps Tactical School. Three months after V-J Day, in December 1945, Maj. Gen. David M. Schlatter arrived at Maxwell as acting commandant of the new school he would organize here. He and most of the AAF planners involved were graduates of ACTS and were imbued with its spirit. Because it would comprise several post-commissioning military colleges and schools, they named it Air University (AU). Gen. Carl Spaatz, Commanding General, Army Air Forces, and a 1925 Tac School graduate, presided over Air University's dedication on 3 September 1946 in Maxwell's Hangar No. 7, where staff, faculty, students, and visitors gathered to get AU off the ground.

Air University's core consisted of three courses for selected junior, intermediate, and senior officer students. They are still the hub of the educational activities, and are, respectively, the Squadron Officer School (SOS), Air Command and Staff College (ACSC), and Air War College (AWC). Their graduates each year number, respectively, about 2,775, 540, and 260. A fourth professional military education school, the USAF Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy at Gunter Air Force Station, graduates about 1,200 noncoms annually.

Maxwell Field Command Post for flood relief, 16 Mar. 1929. Post Commander Maj. Walter R. Weaver is on the telephone.

Air University also has under its wing specialized professional education schools. The Leadership and Management Development Center (LMDC) provides the instruction its title suggests as well as continuing education for commanders, chaplains, lawyers, personnel managers, and comptrollers. The Logistics and Management Center (LMC) at Gunter carries out research to improve USAF logistics support programs. The Academic Instructor and Foreign Officer School (AIFOS) has graduated 28,000 Air Force instructors and provides courses for 200 foreign officers from more than 30 countries each year.

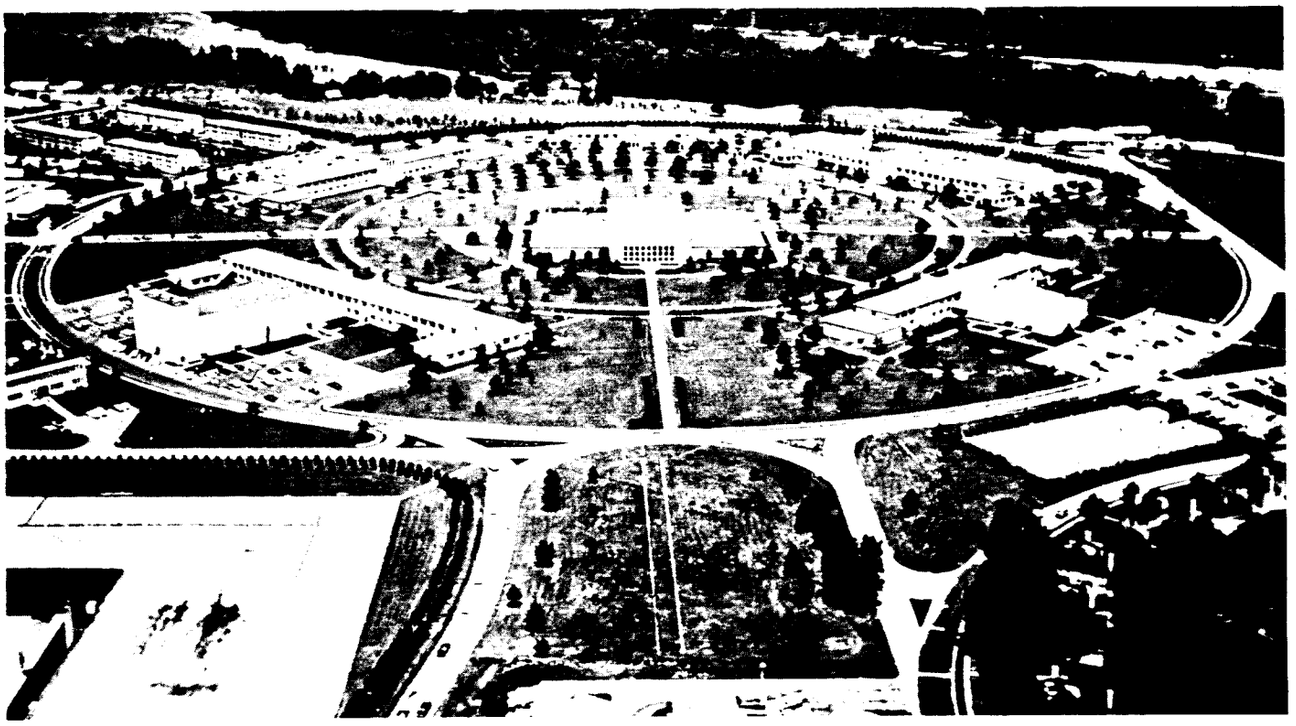
The Extension Course Institute (ECI) at Gunter, the world's largest correspondence school, has an average annual enrollment of 280,000—individuals who cannot attend AU or other Air Force schools in residence. To support all these colleges and schools is the Air University Library (AUL), the largest military library in this country with more than one million books, periodicals, documents, and maps. The 3825th Academic Support Group publishes the Air Force's professional journal, *Air University Review*, and performs a wide range of academic support to AU schools and people.

The Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT), our "North Campus," at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, was begun after World War I in 1919 as the Air Service Engineering School and ranks 18th among more than 200 engineering graduate-degree granting institutions in the nation. It also has continuing education courses in Systems and Logistics and Civil Engineering and overseas Air Force students studying on 250 civilian campuses.

The Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC) is the major source of second lieutenants coming from 162 colleges and universities with 19,000 persons enrolled. It also conducts the Junior AFROTC program for 34,000 students at 275 high schools.

Air University also supports Civil Air Patrol (CAP), a civilian volunteer nonprofit organization with 64,000 members in 2,000 communities in the U.S. CAP senior members perform 80 percent of the air search and rescue missions in the United States. CAP also runs a program of aerospace education in the nation's elementary and secondary schools. Air University's educational programs thus range from grade school through the Ph.D. degree.[25]

Air University also is host to other military tenant organizations, large and small. Two large Air Staff agencies are particularly important to the Air Force. The first, the Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center (AFSHRC), is closely related to AU's mission. It is adjacent to AUL and is accessible to AU students and to civilian



Aerial view of Academic Circle, now Chennault Circle, at Maxwell AFB, hub of USAF officer Professional Military Education.

researchers. The Center contains 3½ million documents, all the historical records of the USAF and its predecessors back to 1907. The second tenant, the Air Force Data Systems Design Center (AFDSDC) at Gunter is the largest tenant organization. It is the operational element of the Air Force Data Automation Agency (AFDAA) and is responsible for developing, operating, and maintaining all USAF automated data processing systems.

For more than the 30 years since its foundation, Air University has continued in the tradition of its predecessor the Air Corps Tactical School in providing post-graduate military education to career officers and NCOs and in trying to be innovative and on the leading edge of the advance of the military art. Technological development, shifts in organization, national policy, and not least, war, have imposed changes on AU.

As an example, post-World War II AU used to have its specialized schools at Craig AFB, AL, and SOS' forerunner at Tyndall AFB, FL. However, when the Korean War broke out, AU lost both bases to other operational or training commands and transferred those schools to Maxwell. The School of Aviation Medicine (SAM), once at Gunter and now at Brooks AFB, TX, was transferred to Air Training Command. In an earlier incarnation, the LMDC (then Warfare Systems School, or WSS) used to teach short courses in specialized aspects of warfare, ranging from space and nuclear weapons down to counterinsurgency (COIN), but those have been transferred elsewhere or discontinued. The Aerospace Studies Institute (ASI) was absorbed into other schools and units.[16]

Today, Air University is a $200-million-dollar-a-year professional education system, unique in its scope and centralized control. It is a member of the American Council on Education, is involved with civilian academe in many ways, and functions much like any large American university system. It differs, however, in having to combat the obsolescence of knowledge in the profession of arms and in helping to maintain a high-quality, professionally prepared United States Air Force to deter or fight wars.

Meanwhile, the warm relationship between Maxwell and Montgomery, the Cradle of the Confederacy in the Heart of Dixie, has continued since World War II. Both the city and the major air command are proud of their history and traditions. Air University inherited its motto; *Proficimus More Irretenti,* from the old Air Corps Tactical School. It means "We proceed unhampered by tradition"—but that's not to say we don't like it![17]

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12. 1st Lt. R. C. Wriston, ed., *Maxwell Field Army Air Corps* (Montgomery, AL, 1929), 7-13. This scarce work is valuable as the only history of Maxwell's early years.

13. General Orders No. 45, War Department, Washington, 8 Nov. 1922. On file, Air University Office of History.

14. [George N. Dubina], *Fifty Years of Aviation History at Maxwell Air Force Base, 1910-1960* (Maxwell AFB, 1960), 26-33 (hereafter, Dubina, *Fifty Years*); Wriston, 53-67.

15. Juliette D. Pearce, *Maxwell: The Man and the Installation*, Air University Monograph No. 29 (unpubl. M.S. thesis, Maxwell AFB, 1968), 4-5.

16. Conversation with Sen. Lister Hill.

17. Now Headquarters, Air University.

18. Maj. Gen. Haywood S. Hansell, Jr., *The Air Plan That Defeated Hitler* (Atlanta, GA, 1972), 12-24, 30-48.

19. Thanks to its early history and this permanent construction, Maxwell is one of the ten oldest Air Force Bases, established as such, still active today. The others are Langley, Kelly, Wright-Patterson, Chanute, Scott, Bolling, Brooks, March, and Mather. Plattsburgh began as a Navy base in 1814, and F. E. Warren and Offutt as Army posts in 1867 and 1888. Of the ten, Wright-Patterson and Maxwell have the longest association with aviation, thanks to the Wright Brothers' pioneer flying both at the Dayton and the Montgomery sites.

20. Robert T. Finney, *History of the Air Corps Tactical School, 1920-1940*, USAF Historical Studies No. 100 (Maxwell AFB, AL, 1955), 25.

21. The first four were graduates, respectively, of ACTS classes of 1935, 1936, 1938, and 1939. McConnell was assistant adjutant of the school in 1940 just before it closed. Finney, *passim*; *Montgomery Advertiser*, 3 Feb. 1940.

22. Dubina, *Fifty Years*, 40.

23. *Ibid.*, 41-50.

24. *Ibid.*, 51.

25. *Air University Facts and Figures* (booklet, Maxwell AFB, AL, 30 Sept. 76), *passim*.

26. The author's personal observations through the years since he first came in uniform to Maxwell in the spring of 1950.

27. And after all, it is in Latin!

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AEROSPACE PROFILE

When he is hidden from the sun,
And grasses grow where he is lai
Men mark the good a man has d
And glorify the name he made.

Henry H. K

Maxwell: The Man and the Base

By Juliette D. Pearce

Maxwell Air Force Base perpetuates the name of a pioneer flyer who lost his life while serving his country. This is an account of the little-known details of 2d Lt. William Calvin Maxwell's life and the base honoring his name.

Records show that William C. Maxwell, the eldest child of John Robert and Jennie Nettles Maxwell, was born in Natchez, Monroe County, Ala., on Nov. 9, 1892. A more detailed report pinpoints the place of his birth as a small, frame house in a wooded area near Fork, Ala., a mile and a half west of Natchez.

Shortly after finishing high school, Maxwell enrolled at the University of Alabama and "worked his way through" as an employee of a power plant in Tuscaloosa. In May 1917, he enlisted in the Army at Fort McPherson, Ga. He received his diploma from the University of Alabama through the mails, the following month.

Maxwell's military career began with an assignment to the 5th Company, 7th Provisional Training Regiment. He was later transferred to the School of Military Aeronautics in Atlanta, Ga., where he had his first association with the world of aviation. In Nov. 1917, like so many members of his generation and the one to follow, he became a flying cadet. Five months later, on April 3, 1918, he graduated at Kelly Field, Texas, went through the formality of a discharge, and immediately accepted a second lieutenant's commission.

After receiving his commission, Lt. Maxwell was assigned to Ellington Field, Texas, where he served as an instructor at the Aerial Gunnery School. In February 1919, he was transferred back to Kelly for instructor duty. In June of the same year, he went to Mitchel Field, N. Y., for duty with the 3d Squadron (Pursuit), which was slated for a tour in the Philippines.

Information about his tour in the Philippines, which his death abruptly ended, is sketchy. A letter from Mrs. R. Renton Hind, assumed to be the wife of an official of Del Carmen Sugar Estate, told of his high esteem in that community. "He was such a fine fellow and you couldn't help feeling his goodness and cleanness when you met him," she wrote.

And Capt. Roy S. Brown, his commander, in a letter to Lieutenant Maxwell's father, cited the young officer as "one of the most conservative and accurate pilots I have here, or have ever had at any station." He called Lieutenant Maxwell "an excellent young man and an equally excellent officer" and added that he had just completed and passed his examinations for the Regular Army.

On Aug. 12, 1920, Lieutenant Maxwell met his death. He took off from Camp Stotsenburg (now Clark Field), in a DH 4 powered by a Liberty engine, on a routine mail run to Manila. His mechanic, Private Jorge Chase, was a passenger.

CRASHES TO AVOID CHILDREN

Over Del Carmen Sugar Estate, some 20 miles south of Camp Stotsenburg, the plane developed engine trouble. Forced to attempt an emergency landing,

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Lieutenant William Calvin Maxwell

Lieutenant Maxwell glided toward a small field. Seeing children playing in the pathway of his landing, he deliberately swerved the aircraft, struck a flagpole in front of the Del Carmen Club with his right wing, breaking both wing and pole. The plane glanced upward, then dived nose down and crashed. Lieutenant Maxwell, who occupied the front seat of the aircraft, was killed instantly. Private Chase sustained a compound fracture of the right leg and severe cuts about the right eye. He eventually recovered.

Lieutenant Maxwell was the Third Aero Squadron's first flying casualty, and the personnel of the post, as well as the citizens of the neighboring communities, were grief-stricken. *The AC News Letter*, Oct. 8, 1920, carried a full account of his death and funeral. Lieutenant Maxwell, the news letter stated, was one of the squadron's most popular officers. The entire post, the article continued, keenly regretted his death.

Mrs. Hind's letter went into some detail about the crash, since she was an eyewitness to it:

I heard the motor go wrong—saw him coming down. His plane seemed to be coming straight for our house and it did hit the roof—then he hit the big flag pole which tore off a wing. He must have known he was going to fall as both he and his helper waved to my kiddies who were playing nearby to keep back.

Captain Brown's letter, also referred to above, made the profound statement that in his five years with the Air Service, no accident had been more regretted by everyone, both officers and enlisted men.

Lieutenant Maxwell's body was returned to Camp Stotsenburg during the afternoon of Aug. 12, and his Philippine funeral was held on August 15. During the impressive funeral procession and services, Capt. Roy S. Brown, Lt. Ira C. Eaker, and Lt. Newton Longfellow flew a formation over the procession and dropped flowers on the hearse.

The body of the fallen officer was returned to the United States and subsequently sent from San Francisco to a rural churchyard cemetery at Robinsonville for a simple burial ceremony on Oct. 11, 1920. These were the final rites for a quiet, gentlemanly man, slender and slightly over six feet tall, friendly but unassuming, who liked reading, hunting, football and horseback riding. The churchyard was the final resting place for a man still under 28 years of age.

The inscription on the white marble headstone of the marker for his grave reads simply:

William Calvin Maxwell
3rd Aero Squadron
Born Nov. 9, 1892
Died in Service, Manila, P. I.
Aug 12, 1920
Affectionate son, fond brother
and a friend to all

But the name, William Calvin Maxwell, was not buried that autumn day, 48 years ago, in the piney woods section of Alabama. Instead, it was destined to live on as the name of an eminent airdrome which has played a significant part in the history of the United States Air Force. It was scheduled to be the temporary address of many a famous general and thousands of officers, airmen and cadets. It would be part of the byword, "The road to Tokyo leads through Maxwell Field," used extensively in the southeastern United States during the troubled days of World War II. And it was scheduled eventually to be the designation of the home of Air University, educational center of the Air Force.

HAS HAD SEVEN NAMES

The land on the west side of Montgomery, Alabama, now known as Maxwell Air Force Base, has had seven names in the last 58 years, and it has been the site of diverse activities since it entered the world of aviation in mid-March 1910.

Prior to the time the Wright brothers came to Montgomery, the land was known as the Kohn Plantation, since it was part of the properties of F. D. Kohn, a Montgomery businessman. From 1910, when the Wright brothers operated their flying school on the site that is now Maxwell, until 1918, the tract carried the name of the famous airmen who brought aviation to Montgomery. People in the Montgomery area called it simply, "Wrights."

On April 4, 1918, F. D. Kohn sold 302 acres, which included the "Wright" tract, to the Federal Government for use as an air repair depot. After becoming government property, the site was known first as Engine and Repair Depot, then Engine and Repair Depot No. 3, and, finally, Aviation Repair Depot. On Jan. 22, 1921, the War Department redesigned the field as Montgomery Air Intermediate Depot.

Maj. Roy S. Brown, who was Commander of the 3rd Aero Sq. in the Philippines at the time of Lieutenant Maxwell's death, assumed command of the Montgomery Air Intermediate Depot in May 1922. He suggested, on Oct. 10, 1922, that the depot be renamed Maxwell Field in honor of Lieutenant Maxwell.

Paragraph 2, General Orders No. 45, War Department, Washington, Nov. 8, 1922, redesignated the post as Maxwell Field.

Mrs. Roy S. Brown, widow of Major Brown, vividly recalls his telling her of his plans to recommend that the Montgomery Air Intermediate Depot be named Maxwell Field. He had suggested that Camp Stotsenburg be renamed Clark Field, in honor Maj. Harold M. Clark, who was killed in an accident over the field in 1920, she said. When Major Brown was assigned to the Montgomery Air Intermediate Depot, he remembered that Lieutenant Maxwell was a native Alabamian and suggested that the depot be named for him. Major Brown had the highest regard for Lieutenant Maxwell, as did everyone, Mrs. Brown said. "He was the nicest young officer," she said. "And the crash was such a tragedy."

Throughout the year 1922, there had been grave doubts among the local citizenry that the Montgomery installation would be retained as an aviation depot. When the field became Maxwell, however, local newspapers heralded the new designation as proof that the base would not be abandoned. One account, published on Nov. 29, 1922, stated definitely that the "flying field will be retained in Montgomery." After some discussion of the proposed activities at the base, the article concluded:

It is fitting that the new name of the Montgomery field should be Maxwell Field. It was named in honor of Lt. William C. Maxwell of Atmore, Alabama, who lost his life in an aeroplane accident in the Philippines in 1920. Lt. Maxwell was one of the most expert flyers in the service in the army before his death. Thus an Alabama field is named for an Alabama man who gave his life to the service of his country.

In May 1930, the City of Montgomery increased Maxwell's acreage by donating 75 acres of land. And, subsequently, the United States Government made various purchases to swell the total acreage of Maxwell Air Force Base to almost 2500 acres.

During the 1920's, activities at Maxwell were somewhat limited. In July 1921, it suffered a reduction in status when it ceased operation as a repair station and began functioning as a supply station. That fall, however, the War Department reorganized and located two units at the field—the 22nd Observation Sq. and the 4th Photo Section. The Air Corps Tactical School was transferred to Maxwell in the spring of 1931. From mid-1931 until 1940, the Air Corps Tactical School was not only the center of Maxwell Field activity but, for all practical purposes, was Maxwell Field. This period has been referred to as the "Pre-War Golden Age of Maxwell."

ENTERS NEW PHASE

The outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 sealed the fate of the Air Corps Tactical School. Well-trained officers, of course, were in great demand for planning and combat duties. In June 1940, instruction at the school was suspended. Meanwhile, Maxwell Field entered another phase of its development as a pillar of national defense, as it embarked on its wartime mission of training personnel to man the nation's air armada. Officially established at Maxwell on July 8, 1940, the Southeast Air Corps Training Center took over facilities formerly used by the Tactical School. Its vast responsibility was the training of all pilot, navigator and bombardier cadets assigned to installations in the southeastern section of the United States.

Lieutenant Maxwell's mother

Lieutenant Maxwell's father.

Lieutenant

The air pioneer as a c de

In December 1943, ceremonies were held to dedicate Maxwell's new facilities, including runways for the B-24 Consolidated Liberators. Highlights of the dedication ceremonies were a speech by Alabama's Senator Lister Hill and the unveiling of a marble monument to Orville Wright and Lieutenant William C. Maxwell. The two-ton, five foot monument, located on the west side of the Base Operations building, bears this inscription:

1910-1943

THIS STONE TO MARK THE
AIRDROME EXPANSION AT
MAXWELL FIELD, COMPLETED
1 DECEMBER 1943, MUST
ENDURE IN HONOR OF
ORVILLE WRIGHT WHO FLEW
HERE ON 26 MARCH 1910
AND LIEUT. WM. C. MAXWELL
FOR WHOM THIS POST IS
NAMED, AND ALL MEN WHO
FLY FOR FREEDOM, THE
LIVING AND THE DEAD.

Senator Hill, in his keynote address, called Maxwell Field a "hallowed ground," named for an American who "gave his life for our country." "From its soil," the Senator said, "have gone many others like unto him who have given their lives that we might continue free."

Maxwell compiled an impressive record during World War II. Its training programs produced more than 100,000 aviation cadets—pilots, navigators and bombardiers. Its 2653 Liberator crews flew 165,544 hours and made 230,720 landings in the B-24 transitional school. And its 728 B-29 crews flew 46,554 hours and made 112,809 landings without one major accident.

Soon after the end of hostilities in the Pacific in August 1945, Maxwell began its transition from wartime to peacetime status. In November, word came that the Eastern Flying Training Command (succes-

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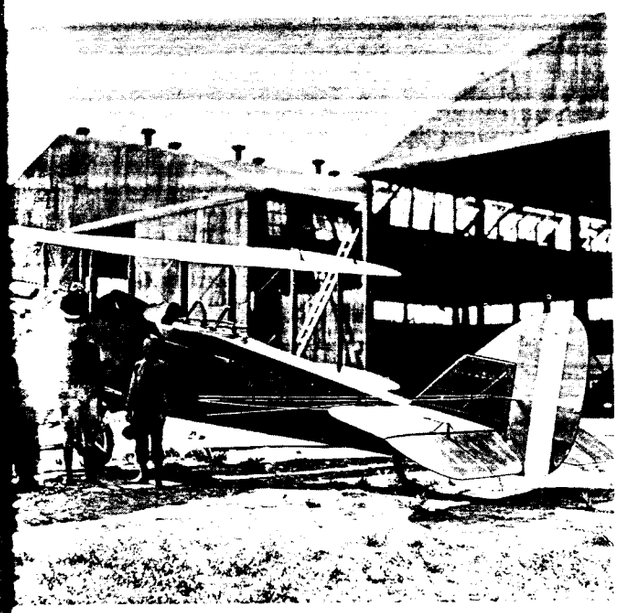
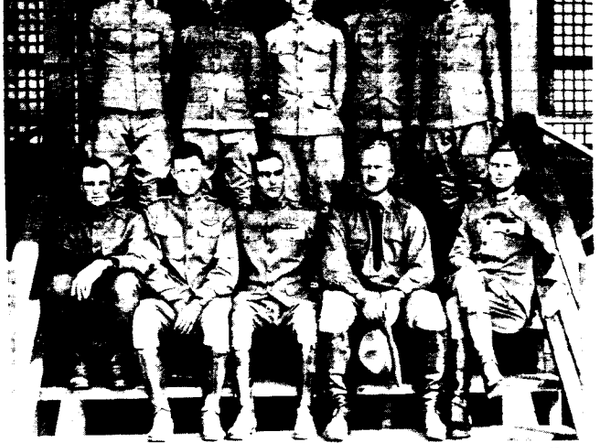
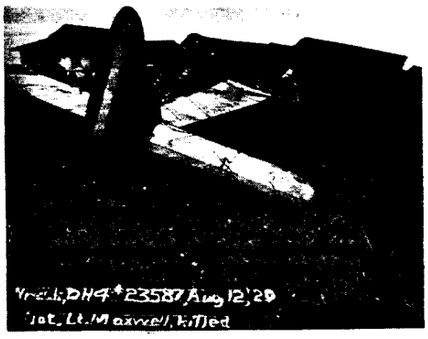


Lieutenant Maxwell (third from left) with his DH-4 crew.



Lieutenant Maxwell (sitting, second from left) with fellow officers in the Philippines.



The DH-4 crash scene.

Orville Wright flys over Montgomery.

sor to the Southeast Air Corps Training Center) would be dissolved and that an educational program was scheduled for Maxwell Field. In the final month of 1945, Maj. Gen. David M. Schlatter, acting commandant of the new school to be established at Maxwell, arrived to begin plotting the course of Air University. And Maxwell entered a new area—professional military education. On Mar. 12, 1946, Air University, with headquarters at Maxwell Field, was officially established. On Jan. 13, 1948, shortly after the Air Force became a separate service, Maxwell Field was redesignated Maxwell Air Force Base.

ALABAMIANS PROUD OF MAXWELL

To some people, Maxwell AFB is only a small segment of the great military organization known as the United States Air Force. But to people in the Montgomery, Ala. area, it is more than an instrument of national defense. It is a singular community where people from all over the United States—indeed, from all over the world—come to study, to learn, and to intermingle their cultures with those of the townspeople.

It is a place where thousands of people earn their livelihood, where many a professional career finds its roots.

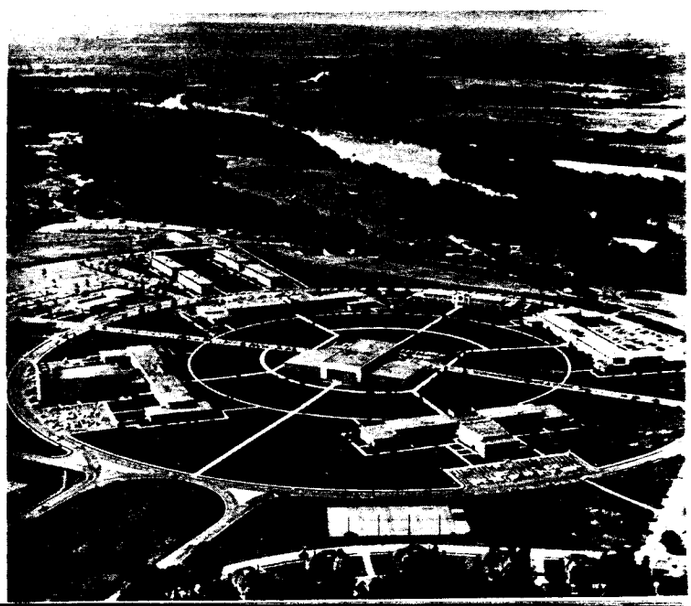
It is a place from which some 91 million dollars go into the local economy through salaries paid the people who man the base and its sister installation, Gunter AFB, through construction and commodities necessary for the maintenance of the two bases.

Though many townspeople still refer to it as "Maxwell Field" instead of "Maxwell Air Force Base," everybody knows that the reference is to the installation on the west side of Montgomery, Ala., where almost countless men and women, great and small, have served from time to time.

The name of a little known hero, William Calvin Maxwell, lives on as the designation of a base which has played and continues to play a notable part in America's aerospace power.

AH/Spring 1969

The Air University academic complex with the Fairchild Library in the center.



24 October, 1935.

SUBJECT: EQUITATION.

TO: Commandant, A.C.T.S., Maxwell Field, Alabama.

1. It is requested that I be relieved from attending the course in Equitation, for the following reasons:

a. I have never liked a horse, nor admired one, except at a safe distance; and for this reason some 27 years ago I decided to walk rather than ride and this led me into the Infantry.

b. I am old and brittle and after riding, I feel as though I had been run over by a tank.

c. I am afraid of a horse, do not understand them, and doubt if they have any sense.

2. I fail to see that horses have any place in the science of aviation.

E. L. HOFFMAN,
Lt. Colonel, Air Corps.

ELH/AP

1st Ind. (4)

The Air Corps Tactical School, Maxwell Field, Montgomery, Alabama. October 25, 1935. To: Lt. Col. E. L. Hoffman, Air Corps, Maxwell Field, Alabama.

1. Disapproved.

2. Equitation has been approved by higher authority as a subject in the Tactical School course. The only ones who can be excused are those so recommended by the Surgeon, for physical reasons.

A. G. FISHER,
Colonel, Air Corps,
Commandant.

248.126

FIFTY YEARS

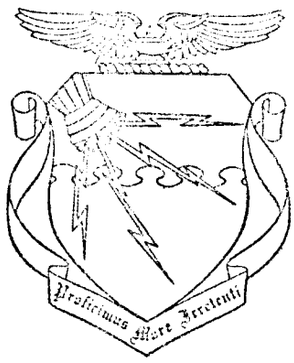
OF

AVIATION HISTORY

AT

Maxwell Air Force Base

1910-1960



Office of Information (Historian)
Headquarters, Air University
Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama

TABLE OF CONTENTS

* *

FIFTY YEARS OF AVIATION HISTORY 1

Today's Operations 2
- Air University, Its History and Development 2
- Mission 6
- Academic Philosophy 11

Maxwell's Yesteryears 15
- Soldiers, Indians, and Settlers 15
- Orville Wright and Student Fliers 17
- Birth of an Air Repair Depot (World War I) 22
- The Not So Roaring Twenties 24
- Flood of Twenty-Nine - Air Relief 30
- Educating Future War Leaders - The Thirties 33
- Training Programs - World War II 41

Memorialization 51
- Naming of Maxwell 51
- Fairchild Library 52
- Austin Hall 52
- Weaver Theater 53
- Harmon Hall 54
- Dargue Hall 54
- Parker Hall 54
- Walker Hall 55
- Polifka Auditorium 55
- Wood Auditorium 56

Air University Coat of Arms 56

FIFTY YEARS OF AVIATION HISTORY

Aviation came to Montgomery, Alabama, 50 years ago -- with the arrival of a Wright brothers' flying machine at a site now known as Maxwell Air Force Base. This event plotted Maxwell's destiny as an aviation center and foretold its future place of eminence in the history of the United States Air Force.

The small tract of land used by Orville Wright and his few students had grown into a base encompassing some 2,500 acres of Alabama soil. The seven people who manned the flying school here have multiplied to thousands of officers, airmen, and civilians who comprise the student and permanent party population of today's Maxwell Air Force Base.

Located immediately south of the foothills of the Appalachian Mountain Chain, with open, flat terrain in all directions, Montgomery offers a natural setting for flying activities. Its climate, with a minimum of freezing temperatures, little fog, moderate winds, and no snow, is conducive to year-round flying.

Maxwell Air Force Base, known by other names during its fifty years, is presently the home of Air University, a major Air Force command which functions as the educational and doctrinal center of the United States Air Force. Air University operates directly under the Chief of Staff, United States Air Force.

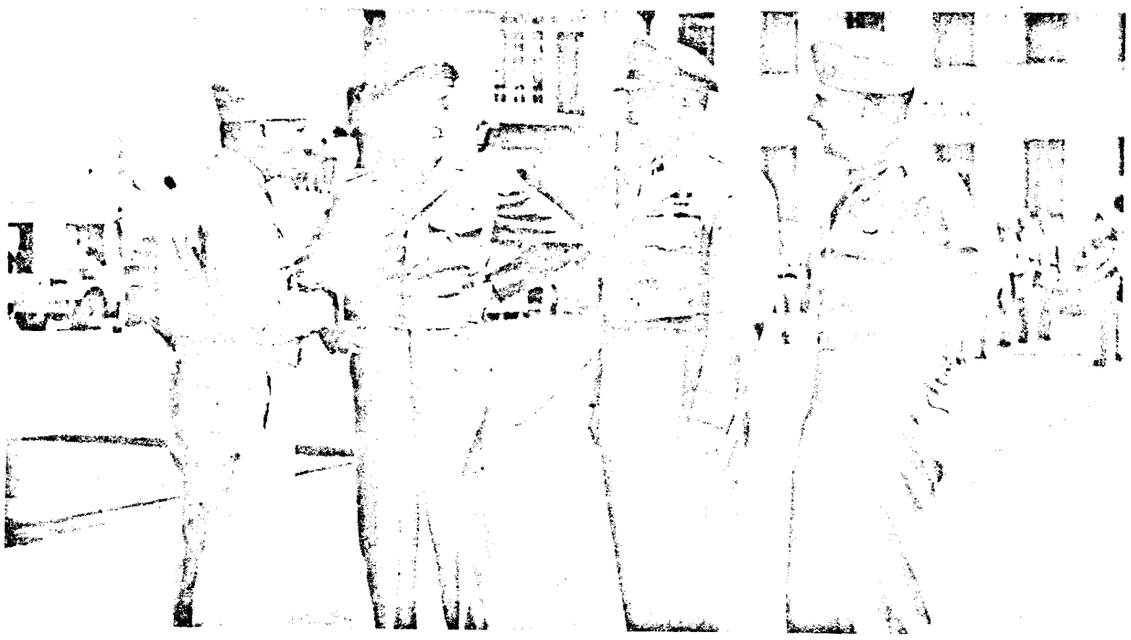
Today's Operations

Air University, Its History and Development

Spurred by the necessity for keeping abreast of scientific advancements in aerial warfare, the Air Force, on November 29, 1945, relocated the Army Air Forces School from Orlando, Florida, to Maxwell Field, where better facilities existed. Four months later (March 12, 1946), the school was redesignated as Air University.

Prior to World War II, the Air Corps Tactical School at Langley Field, Virginia, and later at Maxwell Field, Alabama, was the only school concerned primarily with the organization and employment of airpower. To be sure, the employment of airpower was taught in other Army and military schools, but such teaching was incidental and not the primary objective. Thus it was through the Air Corps Tactical School that the United States entered World War II with a definite airpower doctrine generally accepted throughout the AAF.

The planners of Air University were almost without exception graduates of the Air Corps Tactical School. It was they who sparked planning agencies to consider the establishment of schools for the training of airmen and for the study, formulation, and teaching of theories and methods of aerial warfare.



Maj. Gen. G. D. McDonald, Gen. Carl A. Spaatz, Maj. Gen. Muir S. Fairchild, and Maj. Gen. David M. Schlatter at AU Dedication

Initially, three courses were established. The Air War course was developed to prepare senior officers to assume responsibilities as commanders and staff officers at the top level. For intermediate command and staff duty, the Command and Staff course was designed. A tactical course for junior officers was established at Tyndall Field, Florida. When Air University was given its present designation, these courses became respectively the Air War College, Air Command and Staff School, and Air Tactical School.

This far-reaching educational program was implemented on September 3, 1946, when the first students enrolled in the Air War College and Air Command and Staff School at Maxwell Field and the Special Staff School at Craig Field, Alabama. Other classes began in Air Tactical School at Tyndall Field, Florida. A fifth school, the School of Aviation Medicine, assigned in the spring of 1946 to Air University, continued in operation at Randolph Field, Texas.

To assure that Air University's future role would be accomplished as effectively as possible, the air leaders who formed the command sensed the urgency for creating a truly modern military educational system. Thus they added to the educational responsibilities other requirements to conduct research and doctrinal studies.

Combat-wise Air Force officers, composing the faculty of the various schools, furnished an abundance of tactical knowledge and airpower experience. Professional educators helped develop the educational system so that research and development in technical fields was paralleled with an equally comprehensive program of research and development of ideas. Subjects common to all officers were devised and included in the curricula of the schools.

A Board of Visitors, composed of 15 outstanding civilian educators and business leaders, visits Air University at least once a year and reports to the Chief of Staff on educational and research problems. Through the Board of Visitors, the leaders of Air University have been able to draw upon a great fund of knowledge and experience in education and industry. The advice of these leaders helps Air University to develop sound educational theories and practices, comparable to those of outstanding civilian colleges and universities.

Major educational policies of Air University are determined by the Air University Council. Established in late 1958, as successor to the Air University Faculty Board, the council consists of the Air University Commander; Vice Commander; Chief

of Staff; commandants of Air University's colleges and schools, including Air Force ROTC and Extension Course Institute; directors of Research Studies Institute and Air University Library; commanders of 3800th Air Base Wing and 3894th School Group; Educational Advisor; and the Air University Secretary (Executive Secretary of the Council).

Air University's rapid growth reflects its responsibilities as the center of Air Force education. On April 1, 1950, the Air Force Institute of Technology, whose history dated from 1919, was transferred to Air University from the Air Materiel Command. One month later, the Extension Course Institute was established after that program was transferred from Continental Air Command to Air University.

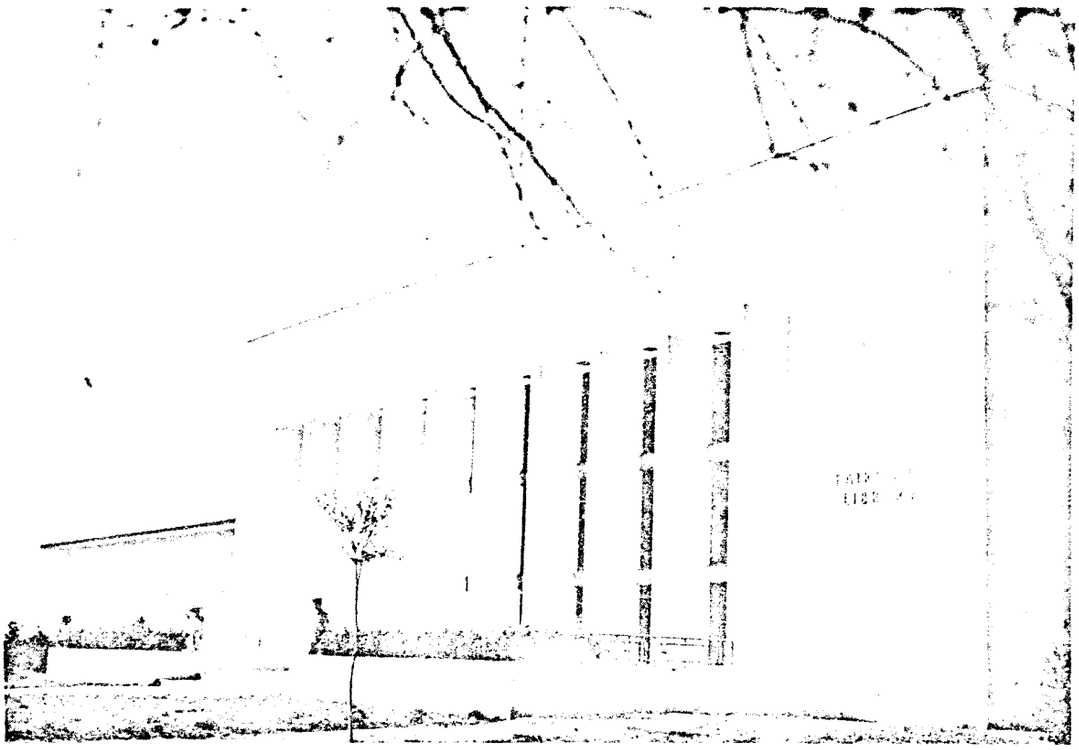
The stability of Air University changed suddenly in June 1950 with the outbreak of the Korean War. Operation of the Air War College was suspended temporarily. By September, the command's programs at Tyndall and Craig were terminated and those installations transferred to Air Training Command. Air Tactical School was replaced by Squadron Officer Course conducted by Air Command and Staff School.

On May 25, 1951, the USAF Historical Division, Documentary Research Division, and Arctic-Desert-Tropic Information Center were organized into the Research Studies Institute.

Air University assumed responsibility for Air Force ROTC effective August 1, 1952. Currently, approximately 100,000 young men are enrolled in 176 detachments and 13 sub-detachments in civilian colleges and universities. This source provides the United States Air Force with approximately 56 per cent of its new lieutenants each year.

The 3894th School Group attained group stature in September 1953. Four years earlier this organization was activated to perform administrative and professional functions incident to the maintenance of records of Air Force personnel assigned as either students or instructors in other service schools.

An integral part of the university is the Air University Library. Named after the founder of Air University, "Fairchild Library" possesses nearly 700,000 items. Included are many movie films and prints.



Air University's Fairchild Library

Air University completed during the fall of 1955 an $8,000,000 building program at Maxwell to house the activities of the former Air Command and Staff College and Air University Library. In the summer of 1959 another phase of the building program to provide modern academic facilities for the School of Aviation Medicine was completed at Brooks Air Force Base, Texas. The school moved from Randolph Air Force Base to its new location in August.

In its first major reorganization since 1954, Air University began operation under a new organizational structure on July 1, 1959. Principal change was the elimination of one intermediate headquarters, Air Command and Staff College. Components of the former AC&SC became separate operative organizations known as Command and Staff College, Squadron Officer School, Warfare Systems School, and Academic Instructor School. The word "Air" was dropped from the name of the senior school of Air University, making its designation War College. Similarly, the name of the Air Force Institute of Technology was shortened to Institute of Technology, and the School of Aviation Medicine, USAF, became the School of Aviation Medicine. Extension Course Institute, USAF, which

functions at Gunter Air Force Base, was redesignated as Extension Course Institute. Responsibility for administration of personnel and logistical support of school units at Maxwell went to a new organization, the 3851st Support Group (School Support).

Lt. Gen. Walter E. Todd is Air University's Commander. The command's principal units and officers who head them are: War College, Maj. Gen. Richard H. Carmichael, Commandant; Command and Staff College, Brig. Gen. Frederick E. Calhoun, Commandant; Squadron Officer School, Brig. Gen. Clarence T. Edwinson, Commandant; Academic Instructor School, Col. Robert A. Woods, Commandant; Warfare Systems School, Col. Charles C. Simpson, Jr., Commandant; Institute of Technology, Brig. Gen. Cecil E. Combs, Commandant; Air Force ROTC, Brig. Gen. William J. Bell, Commandant; Research Studies Institute, Col. Claude E. Putnam, Director; Extension Course Institute, Lt. Col. Wilfred W. Wagner, Commandant; Air University Library, Mr. Robert W. Severance, Director; 3800th Air Base Wing, Col. Clyde C. Harris, Jr., Commander; 3894th School Group, Col. Samuel S. Riddle, Jr., Commander; and 3851st Support Group, Lt. Col. Walter T. Steves, Commander.

In October 1959 Headquarters USAF transferred the School of Aviation Medicine at Brooks Air Force Base (Texas) and its branch school at Gunter Air Force Base (Alabama) to the Air Training Command. The school and other Air Force medical activities in the San Antonio area were merged into the new USAF Aerospace Medical Center.

Past commanders of the AAF School and Air University include the following generals in order of their succession:

Maj. Gen. David M. Schlatter, Gen. Muir S. Fairchild, Maj. Gen. Robert W. Harper, Maj. Gen. Orvil A. Anderson (acting), Gen. George C. Kenney, Lt. Gen. Idwal H. Edwards, Maj. Gen. John DeF. Barker (acting), Gen. Laurence S. Kuter, Lt. Gen. Dean C. Strother, Maj. Gen. Robert F. Tate (interim), and Lt. Gen. Walter E. Todd.

Mission

Stated briefly, objectives of Air University are to prepare officers for command of major Air Force units and for staff duties appropriate to such positions. Educational facilities are provided to meet the generalized educational, scientific, and technical requirements of the Air Force in the aerospace age.

One of the major responsibilities of Air University is the formulation of Air Force doctrine. It must also draft the progressive changes required to keep this doctrine current

Photos read from left to right, top to bottom: Generals Schlatter (AAF School Commandant), Fairchild, Harper, Kenney, Air University's coat of arms, Generals Edwards, Kuter, Strother, Todd

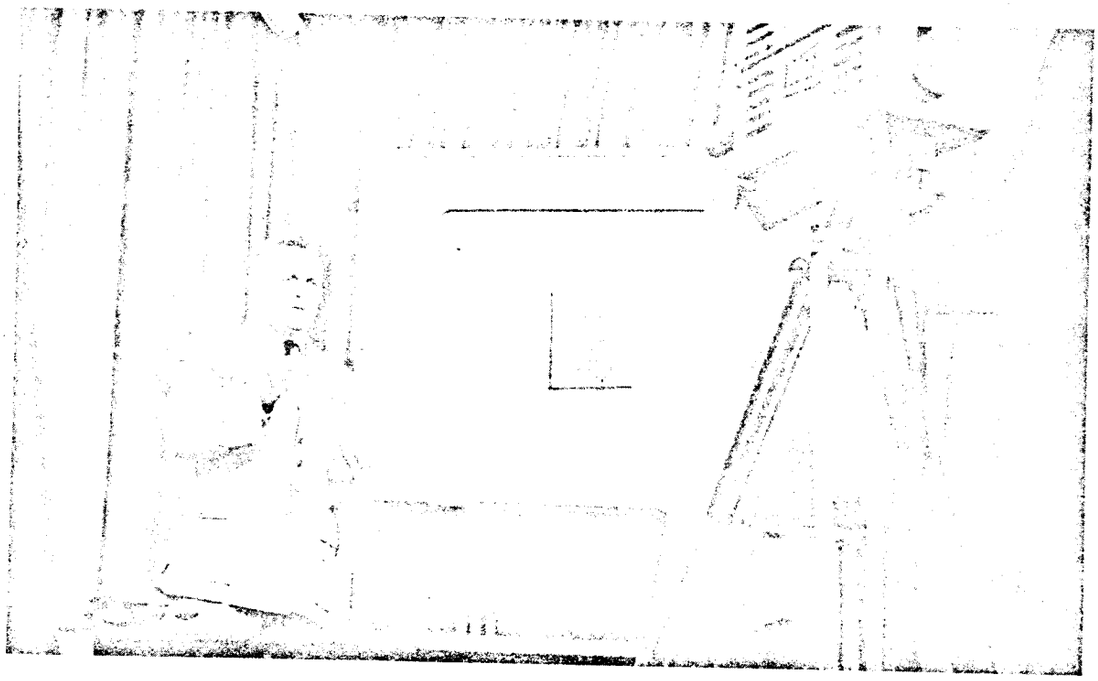
and valid in face of frequent changes and new developments in weapon systems.

Air University, encompassing a series of postgraduate professional schools, produces air commanders and staff officers in much the same fashion as civilian universities produce doctors and lawyers. Future air leaders are instilled with the most modern concepts of the employment of aerospace power.

The first professional school within the Air University system is the Squadron Officer School which prepares junior officers for command and staff duties at lower organizational levels. Students are lieutenants and captains with three to eight years' commissioned service.

The second school in Air University is the Command and Staff College. Instruction prepares the student for command and staff duty at intermediate organizational levels such as in the wing or numbered air force. Students are captains and majors with less than 16 years' commissioned service.

Senior school of Air University, and of the Air Force, is the War College at Maxwell Air Force Base. Its objectives are to prepare senior officers for high command and staff duty with large Air Force organizations; to promote sound



Closed circuit television at AU's Command and Staff College

concepts on the broad aspects of aerospace power; and to assure the most effective development of aerospace power.

Most of the students in War College are Air Force lieutenant colonels with 15 to 22 years' commissioned service. The ten-month course accommodates 160 students, of whom 130 are members of the Air Force. Remainder are Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Royal Air Force, and Royal Canadian Air Force officers, with a few civil servants from such governmental levels as the State Department and Central Intelligence Agency.

In addition to its major professional schools, Air University conducts specialized courses. One is the Academic Instructor School which prepares officers, airmen, and civilians to be effective classroom instructors.

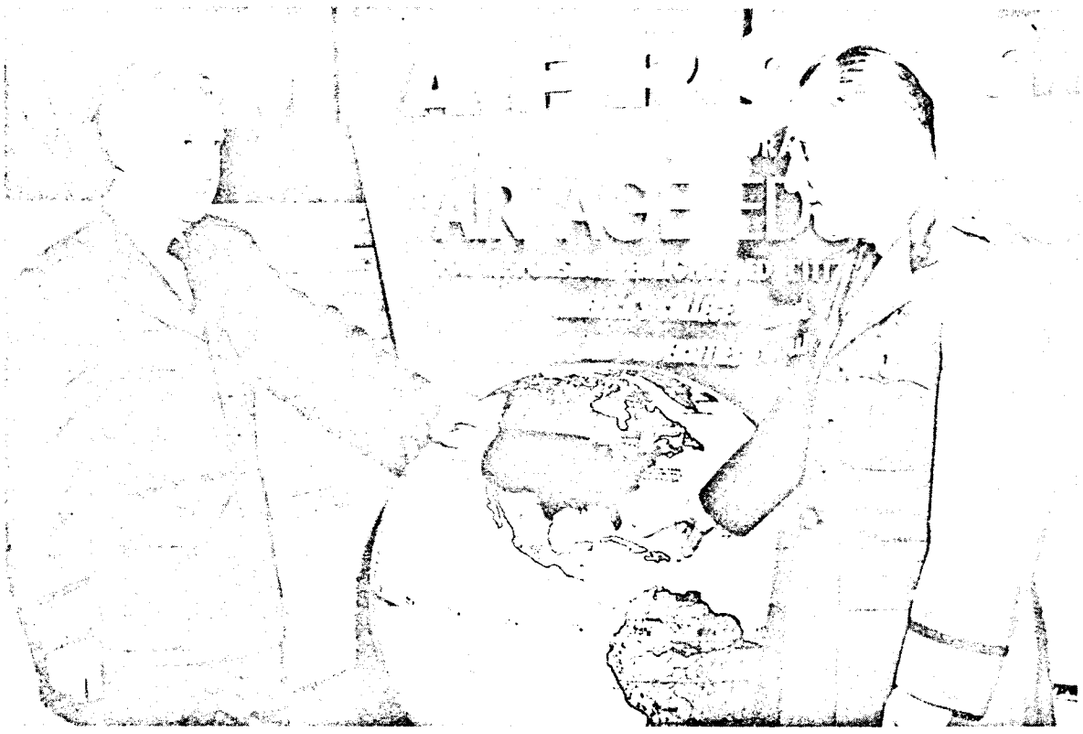
Warfare Systems School provides instruction covering air weapon systems and the impact of technological developments on the employment of aerospace power.

Air University's Institute of Technology is the primary agency within the Air Force for furnishing officers advanced education in various important technical areas such as nuclear engineering and electronics. The Institute of Technology conducts two programs. One is the resident school at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. The other is a non-resident program whereby Air Force officers attend civilian institutions to further their technical education in fields needed by the Air Force.

Another important responsibility of Air University is the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps program. Students receive Air Force instruction as part of their education while enrolled as undergraduates at civilian colleges and universities participating in the AFROTC program. Upon satisfactory completion of Air Force instruction, and their graduation from college, Air Force ROTC cadets are commissioned as second lieutenants in the Air Force Reserve and ordered to active duty.

The Extension Course Institute is Air University's correspondence school. Two main categories of personnel are enrolled: Air Force members on active duty who cannot attend resident courses, and Air Reservists not on active duty who desire to further their Air Force education and training. Current enrollment is 315,000.

To support Air University educational programs, there are at Maxwell Air Force Base the Air University Library and the Research Studies Institute. The library provides services for students, faculty, and staff personnel who seek to expand their knowledge about airpower.



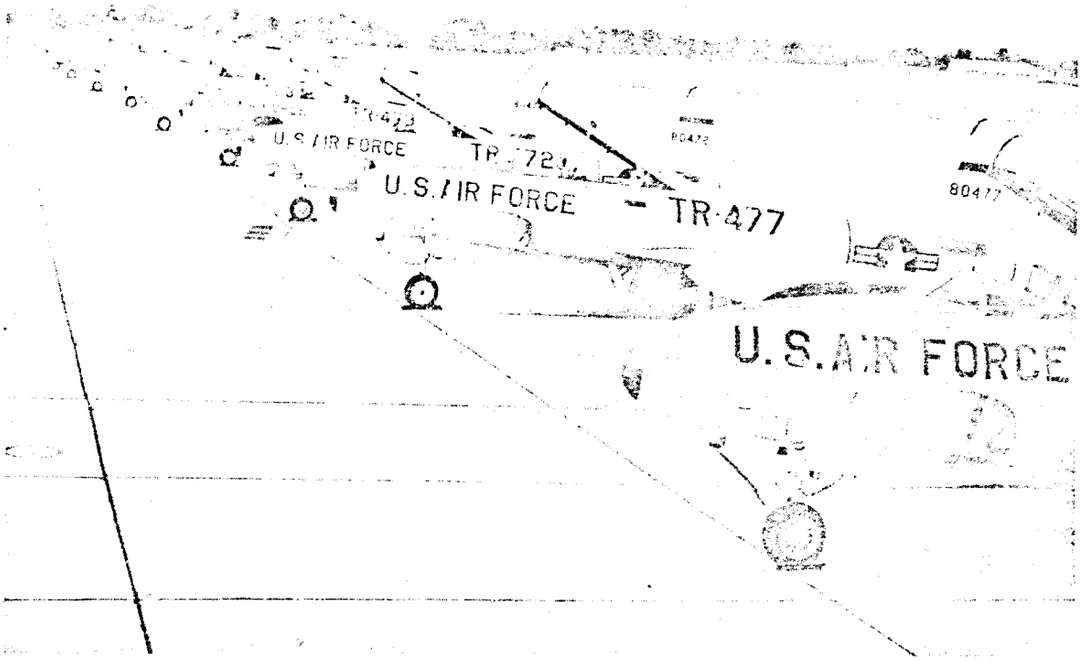
Air Force chaplains schedule visits to AFROTC detachments

Research Studies Institute supports Air University educational programs and also performs specialized research for the rest of the Air Force. Its staff prepares special studies in political, social, economic, military, and geographic fields; operates the USAF historical program; and helps formulate current Air Force aerospace doctrine.

In addition to the responsibility for operating its own schools, Air University provides instructors on Air Force subjects at 24 schools of other branches of the military services. Representative locations are: Industrial College of the Armed Forces, National War College, U. S. Army War College, U. S. Naval War College, Armed Forces Staff College, U. S. Army Infantry School, U. S. Artillery and Missiles School, and Marine Corps Educational Center. This function is administered by the 3894th School Group.

T-33, T-29, C-54, C-47, L-17, and U-3A aircraft are maintained at Maxwell to help students, instructors, and administrative officers maintain combat readiness as aircrew members.

Many of the widespread and varied support activities at Maxwell and Gunter Air Force Bases are the responsibility of



T-33's on the flight line at Maxwell Air Force Base

the 3800th Air Base Wing, thereby leaving Air University Headquarters and the schools free to concentrate on their primary mission of professional education.

Academic Philosophy

The principal educational objective of Air University is the professional development of the USAF officer. A broad professional background is as much a requisite for professional air officers as for professionals in any other endeavor. To be well rounded every newly commissioned United States Air Force officer should have a basic knowledge of the humanities and the social, physical, and biological sciences, with particular emphasis on economics, geopolitics, history, psychology, and international relations. Such educational experience is usually obtained at the Air Force Academy or in the civilian institution where the newly commissioned officer has been enrolled in the AFROTC program. Without this type of foundation it would be difficult, if not impossible, for the officer to progress later through the pyramidal educational structure which has been established by the Air Force in Air University.

Effective air commanders and staff officers must have thorough and intimate knowledge of concepts, doctrines, strategy, tactics, and weapons which are a part of their profession. Too, the problems of technological warfare, the responsibilities to society imposed by modern weapons, and the relationships of military, industrial, and political spheres make it imperative that officers understand the forces which shape our civilization.

The fundamental aspects of an officer's background come largely from his secondary and collegiate educational experiences. Training directed toward specific technical proficiency is provided to a great extent in the Air Force by the Air Training Command. On the other hand, Air University is concerned with education in those areas related to the development of the professional abilities of the Air Force officer.

These objectives guide Air University in planning its educational program:

1. An understanding of the powers and limitations of a nation and the necessary integration of all elements of a nation's power in a unified strategy in support of its policy.

2. A realization of the role played by military forces in a national strategy.

3. An adequate doctrine for the employment of air forces as a military weapon.

4. A knowledge and development of the administration and operation of military air forces.

5. An appreciation of the dangers of traditionalism and rigidity of thought.

6. The development in officers of the powers of thought and expression, meanwhile providing them with the tools of their profession.

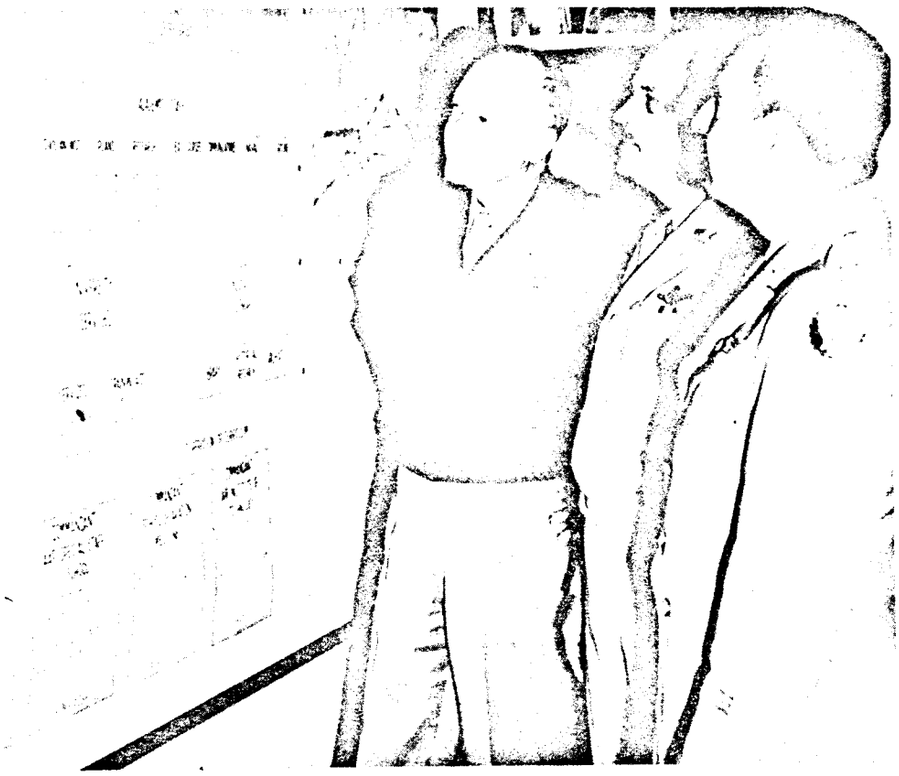
7. The development in officers of facility in oral and written expression.

Therefore, Air University seeks to develop in its graduates the power to solve problems by well ordered, resourceful, and original thought. The problems which confront Air Force planners and leaders encompass nearly all human knowledge and experience and pass far beyond the technical and scientific fields. Since problems develop quickly in our dynamic society, Air University

students must project air problem studies far into the future.

Guiding policies of Air University today have their origin with General Fairchild's dedication speech of September 3, 1946. In particular, General Fairchild, the Air University founder, emphasized his full support of academic freedom as a learning process.

Much that has been learned during the last world war is of permanent value. Included are the priceless lessons in the field of air leadership. Out of them has come a proud



General "Ike" Eisenhower at Air University in 1947
with Generals Fairchild and Schlatter

tradition that no bombing attack was ever turned back by enemy action. Such lessons and traditions must be preserved and passed to those who will join the Air Force in future years.

Thus, some traditions are fine inspirational assets by any test; however, traditionalism in general is a deadly danger.

Recognizing this early, Air University actively avoided traditionalism, rigidity of thought and doctrine, and standardization of instruction, which tend to provide dogmatic answers to the problems of the future. Symbolic of this belief is the Air University motto: We Make Progress by Custom Unhindered.

Since traditions can hamper sound development, Air University adopted another operating policy: "Air University is not a post-war school system -- it is a pre-war school system!" All instruction is attuned to this concept.

Another principle of Air University holds that: "The most adequate air defense will never win [a war] for the United States, but its lack may well lose us one!" For this reason, students find due emphasis placed upon the importance of air defense, particularly about the air defense problem for continental United States. This problem is considered more fully in each higher level of the command's system of education.

Still another basic policy of Air University has been stated as follows: "The ultimate objective of airpower is to force the capitulation of an enemy nation by air action applied directly against the vital points of its national structure."

The command endeavors to develop further the student's skill in oral and written self-expression. Facility in such skills is required of all officers. Staff officers must present their studies, papers, and correspondence to superiors, clearly, concisely, and convincingly. Commanders must clearly and precisely communicate to subordinates their policies, intentions, and desires so as to prevent any possibility of misunderstanding. Air University seeks to improve the communication skills of all students.

General Fairchild offered the greatest challenge that guides the successor commanders of this command: "We conceive it to be the high and noble goal of Air University to educate and to aid in producing the planners and future leaders of that Air Force. It is our earnest belief that the most nearly capable our future Air Force is of adequately dealing with any situation that may confront it, the less will be the likelihood of its employment in war. Should Air University succeed in educating and producing such planners and future leaders that they may design an Air Force so adequate that it need never be used, we shall have completely fulfilled our mission."

Soldiers, Indians, and Settlers*

Over four hundred years ago soldiers of an expedition through the gulf country passed through the area presently known as Montgomery, Alabama, and spent some time on the site known today as Maxwell Air Force Base.

Hernando De Soto while serving in Peru under Pizarro had become interested in the gold found in that country. Upon his return to Spain, the King granted him a governorship of the lower gulf country of this continent. De Soto, hoping to reap a rich harvest in gold in the new world, promptly organized an expedition to explore the land and its resources. He landed in the present day Tampa area of Florida in 1539 and spent nearly a year and a half searching carefully for the elusive gold there. Pushing northward in his relentless search for the yellow metal, De Soto arrived at the bend of the Alabama River in September 1540.

Here De Soto found a small Indian village known as Towassa and inhabited by the Indian tribe known as Alabamos, for whom Alabama was named. Finding the climate inviting and the grass luxuriant, De Soto remained for a week to refresh his troops and his horses. Upon leaving this village the Indians gave him 30 women baggage carriers, in return for 30 knives and 30 mirrors.

Records of travelers and fur traders who traversed this region reveal that these Towassa Indians were trading with the whites as early as 1685. Before the American Revolution the British dominated trade with the Indians in the gulf region. Under the Georgia trade regulations, originally fixed by the colonial governor of 1761, Robert Walton was the trader allotted this place. After the Revolution, the United States sought to trade officially with the Indians but as the latter became so much in debt to the British they continued to trade mostly with them.

Bienville and his French soldiers passed up the Alabama River on their way to establish Fort Toulouse on the Coosa River and likely visited Towassa in 1715. Charleston traders were coming into Alabama country after 1685 and it is quite

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*Based upon an article by Dr. Peter A. Brannon, Director, State Department of Archives and History, which appeared in the Montgomery Advertiser in 1942.

probable that the Towassa Indians, as their neighbors and kinsmen, the Coosada Indians, had contact with the whites from well before 1700. Some writers have described the Coosada Indians as a malicious, wandering, rather irresponsible group, often up to some devilment. It is quite possible that these Towassans followed in the footsteps of their kinsmen. The Alabamos were one of the most hostile tribes during the Creek War in 1813.

Col. Benjamin Hawkins, the United States Indian agent in the gulf region between 1796 and 1816, recounted some visits to the Towassa Village. He reported seeing some lots fenced with cane and others with rails. Potatoes and peanuts were grown on the east side of the river and corn across on the north bottoms of the Alabama River. As late as 1797 the Indians here had no cattle, but raised a few hogs.

Archeological investigations of Towassa by the Alabama Anthropological Society revealed the following degree of civilization. The Towassans were mound builders who did not practice urn burial. These Indians were experts in working shell and rare art objects of that material have been uncovered. Good pottery was made by these natives. Their pottery was glazed and sometimes polished with a charred-oil finish. They produced bobbin-shaped ear plugs and long spindle globular-headed pins from the columella of the shell which reflected their decorative skill. Old beads and large razor-size knives of practically pure iron of European origin were uncovered too. Such items evidenced extensive trade with European traders.

DeCraney, a French cartographer, noted the town of Towassa on his map in 1733. The French census of 1760 listed the place with ten warriors.

After the Revolutionary War, the United States took over all this gulf region as part of their territory and opened the region for settlement by Americans.

The Treaty of Fort Jackson, on August 9, 1814, ended the Creek War and further threat of Indian hostility in this area. Then the territory was opened for settlement and hardy pioneers were not lacking. When the new town obtained its charter in 1819 the population of both the town and the county of Montgomery was approximately 6,500.

Enterprising men who visualized the advantages of a location in the immediate vicinity of Montgomery purchased their land from the United States government. Some of them included Andrew Dexter, who founded "New Philadelphia"; George R. Clayton and associates, "East Alabama"; and Gen. John Scott and associates, "Alabama Town." Two of these rival villages, New

Philadelphia and East Alabama, were incorporated under the name "Montgomery" in 1819. Alabama Town was later added.

Montgomery, the capital of Alabama, marks its organized beginning on December 3, 1819, when it was incorporated and named by the first legislature of the State of Alabama. The first settler, according to official records, was Arthur Moore. In 1814 Moore built his cabin on a bluff of the river just below the location of the present Union Station.

This area in Alabama was visited by Wilbur Wright in 1910. Finding a climate and terrain suitable for year-round flying, the Wrignt brothers established a flying school in Montgomery, Alabama. This school perhaps plotted Maxwell's future role as an aviation center.

Orville Wright and Student Fliers

In 1903, the famous aviation team, Wilbur and Orville Wright, made their first successful aerial flight, and during the ensuing several years they pursued their aviation experiments at Dayton, Ohio. Seven years after their initial successful flight, however, Wilbur Wright toured the South in search of a site for a landing field. The Ohio landing strip where the brothers conducted their flying activities could be used only in warm weather. Therefore, they wanted to establish an aviation training center in the South where they could take full advantage of the early spring and late fall.

After visiting Augusta and Atlanta, Georgia, as well as several places in Florida, Wilbur Wright came to Montgomery on February 20, 1910. A committee composed of some Montgomery businessmen assisted him in search of a suitable landing field. At the suggestion of one committee member, Mr. Wright visited a plantation owned by Mr. F. D. Kohn on the Washington Ferry Road. Finding this site acceptable for a flying field, Wilbur Wright expressed interest in using the plantation as an aviation training site. He proposed bringing one of the Wright aircraft and several aviation students here.

Montgomery's Commercial Club, predecessor of the Chamber of Commerce, by courtesy of Mr. Kohn, offered the use of the Washington Ferry Road tract to Mr. Wright without charge. Further, the club agreed to construct a hangar for the Wright plane and to furnish transportation for Wilbur and his aviation students to and from Montgomery.

Local newspapers heralded the beginning of aviation in Montgomery. "Eyes of Montgomery are now being turned toward a point on the Washington Ferry Road about three miles from the city known as the Kohn plantation," the local paper

reported. "This is the site chosen by Wilbur Wright for a spring training camp for practice and experiments in aviation. In a few weeks, or April 1 to be more specific, the eyes of the entire nation, if not the world, will be fastened on Montgomery. As far as aerial travel is concerned, Alabama's capital for the following two months probably will be a center of activity."

Montgomery prepared for the introduction of aviation in its midst. A "shed" sufficiently large to house two flying machines was erected on the Kohn property. Ground around the building was cleared of undergrowth to permit takeoffs and landings. Lights were installed, and the gravel road leading to the flying site was improved.

Merchants quickly sensed the advertising potential of the newest activity to the city. The big shed and the large sliding doors on it were covered with advertisements of Montgomery firms.

The plane, one of the early craft built by the Wrights, reached Montgomery from its shipping point, Cincinnati, in mid-March. Shortly thereafter, two aviation students, W. R. Brookins and J. W. Davis, and a mechanic, C. E. Taylor, arrived and began assembling the "great mechanical bird." Soon the assembled craft rested in its shed awaiting only the arrival of Orville Wright.

Wright brothers' aircraft shed

Two wings, then called planes, constituted the greater part of the aircraft. They were first placed in position after which struts and guy wires were inserted and tightened into place. The wings, about 41 feet long with a cord or width of 6 feet, 6 inches, were held apart and parallel at a distance of 6 feet. On the lower wings, seats were mounted for 2, pilot and student.

The motor, with fuel tank and cooling system, was to the rear and somewhat to the right of the pilot's seat. Another 10 feet to the rear were two parallel planes or elevators in horizontal position. To the rear of the main planes and 10 feet apart were the propellers, a "pusher" type used exclusively then. They received power from a gasoline engine by means of a chain drive.

The plane weighed 800 pounds empty. Fully loaded with gasoline and water, the plane weighed 902 pounds, including the motor which weighed 190 pounds. The motor had 4 cylinders with 4-inch stroke, $4\frac{1}{2}$-inch bore, and developed 25 to 35 horsepower. It carried gasoline sufficient for about 4 hours' flight.

On the day after the plane was assembled, Orville Wright, the acknowledged "wizard of the air," arrived in Montgomery and assumed charge of matters. S. C. Crane, another aviation student, accompanied Mr. Wright to Montgomery.

Local citizens, intensely interested in the mysterious flying machine, eagerly anticipated Orville Wright's initial flight here. After his arrival in Montgomery, however, he announced that his trial flights would be delayed until the system of rudder planes on the aircraft was changed. Also, it was necessary to construct a single track or monorail runway almost 200 feet long for launching the craft.

On March 26, 1910, Orville Wright made his first aerial flights in Montgomery, Alabama. Actually taking to the air to test the new arrangement of rudder planes, Mr. Wright flew alone for approximately 5 minutes in each of 2 flights. In neither flight did he exceed an altitude of 50 feet.

"A strange new bird soared over cotton fields to the west of Montgomery Saturday afternoon," the local press announced. "It was the graceful aeroplane of Orville Wright, guided by the hand of the pioneer of the skies himself. The big biplane took to the air, ascending in a long, graceful curve. Under perfect control it followed the hand of Orville Wright, turning, ascending, descending at his bidding." Mr. Wright deemed the experiment satisfactory, the article continued.

Shortly after Orville Wright's local aerial debut, an

in-flight accident grounded the biplane temporarily. A valve head inside a cylinder worked loose, breaking the cylinder head and a piston. "Throughout the enforced descent," the newspaper account of the accident read, "the big kite glided easily to the ground and settled without a jar sufficient to shake Mr. Wright and his companion, Mr. Brookins, from their narrow seats." After the accident, Mr. Wright gave the press a few words about the art of flying. "Airplane sailing," he explained, "is not all mere manipulation of the engine. There is judgment of currents to be taken, balancing to be gauged, and the many intricacies of piloting that will come only with practice.

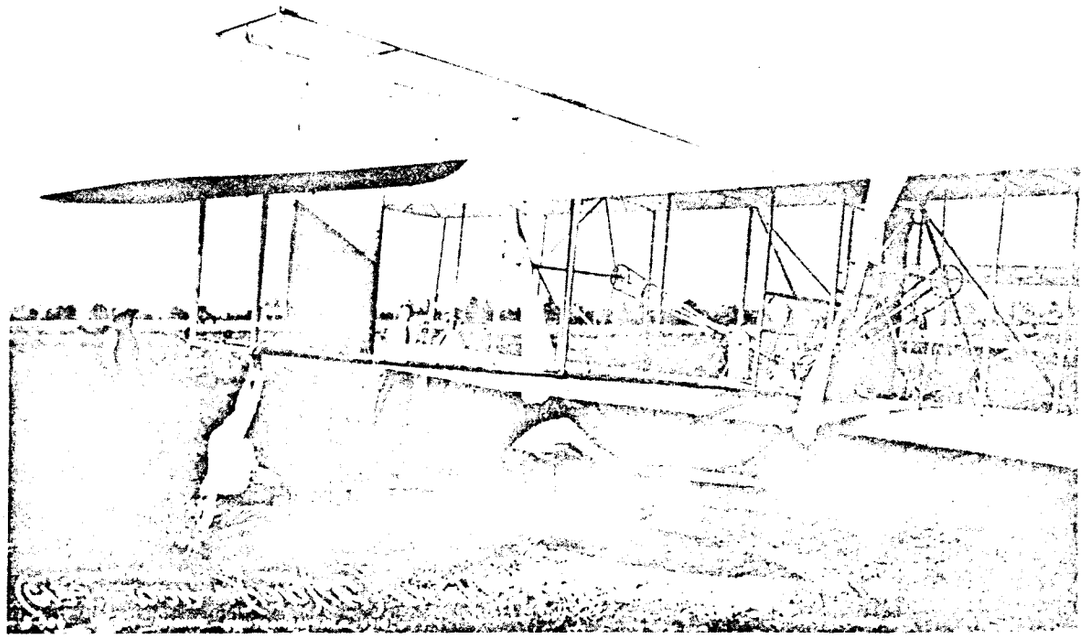
After the aviators repaired the craft, flying was resumed except for Sundays and those periods when the plane was idle for repairs.

Meanwhile aviation's popularity flourished. Crowds came to the Washington Ferry Road site in cars, buggies, carriages, and even by a shuttle train operated by the Mobile and Ohio Railroad from downtown Montgomery. Spectators who drove horses were warned to be careful at the flying site since the noise of the motor and strange appearance of the airplane had frightened such animals.

Scores of individuals, many of them females, made application to Mr. Wright for flying lessons. He continued, however, to limit his flying instruction to five men: W. R. Brookins, J. W. Davis, and S. C. Crane, who came to Montgomery immediately after the establishment of the school; and Archie Hoxsey and L. N. Welch, who joined the class somewhat later. Most of the applications received from women, Orville Wright said, were for the purpose of "obtaining notoriety."

Demand for flying machines soared, the Montgomery Advertiser announced. "Machines are quoted about $7,500. Nor is the demand limited to use in military maneuvers. Society is rapidly adopting the sport. The aeroplane industry, at present, is in its infancy. Only a few years ago an automobile was considered a rich man's toy. Motor cars were not brought into commercial use and only the wealthy could afford to buy them. It's the same way with flying machines. Only the very wealthy with a desire for the new sensation for aerial flights can and will invest in aeroplanes now. Perhaps this will be changed some day, but even under existing conditions the demand for aeroplanes is rapidly growing."

Engine trouble plagued Wright and his aviators. In early April, Orville Wright shipped the biplane's motor to Dayton for complete overhauling. He later went to Dayton to supervise the repair. After a few weeks, he returned to Montgomery. Flying



The Wrights' "great mechanical bird" flown at Montgomery

was resumed too.

Flight durations now increased and Orville Wright even attained greater altitudes. Later in April he reached 1,000 feet, and in one flight he climbed to nearly 2,000 feet.

Concurrently he taught his students the art of flying, executing landings, takeoffs, turns, and balancing. Matters were proceeding so smoothly by this time that often Orville was making 8 or 10 flights a day. The local press referred to him as "a professor of flying, the first one America has ever boasted."

In 1910 Orville Wright had definite ideas about the future use of the airplane. When, at the end of one busy day, a reporter asked about the eventual use of the airplane outside war operations and government use, Mr. Wright replied that he thought it would be used "to carry mail between certain points, for quick journeys in place of a special train, and for personal recreation."

Early in May 1910, W. R. Brookins, Orville Wright's senior

student, soloed. Shortly thereafter Mr. Wright left for Dayton to conduct another flying training school during the summer months. Brookins assumed charge of activities in Montgomery.

Later in May came the announcement that Wright's aeroplane, like all other birds, would fly northward for the summer, and the aviation site at the Kohn farm would be abandoned.

On May 25, 1910, shortly before leaving Montgomery, W. R. Brookins and Arch Hoxsey made the first night flights in the history of heavier-than-air flights. Wearied by unfavorable weather, thwarted by daylight winds, they decided on the bold expedient of night flight. The first flight was made at approximately 10:30 p. m., and still other flights continued throughout the night and early morning hours, varying from 10 to 20 minutes. Landing after a 20-minute flight seconds before midnight, the two young aviators expressed the opinion that their night flights were more satisfactory than any they had made during daylight.

With the passing of Orville Wright and his students' flying, aviation activities ceased here for the next eight years. The brief experience with flying training in Montgomery in 1910 marked another first for aviation too. The world's first school for instruction in aviation was operated locally by the pioneers of aviation -- the Wright brothers.

And the Wright school could well be claimed a success. Five new aviators were trained by the "professor of flying" himself at a time when the United States' supply of aviators was less than thirty. The first night flights in the history of aviation were made too. Paulhan, in his notable flight in Great Britain, accomplished part of his journey after dusk had fallen. Never before, however, were night hours chosen for aerial navigation until two young men in Montgomery, Alabama, flew through the night skies hour after hour in May 1910.

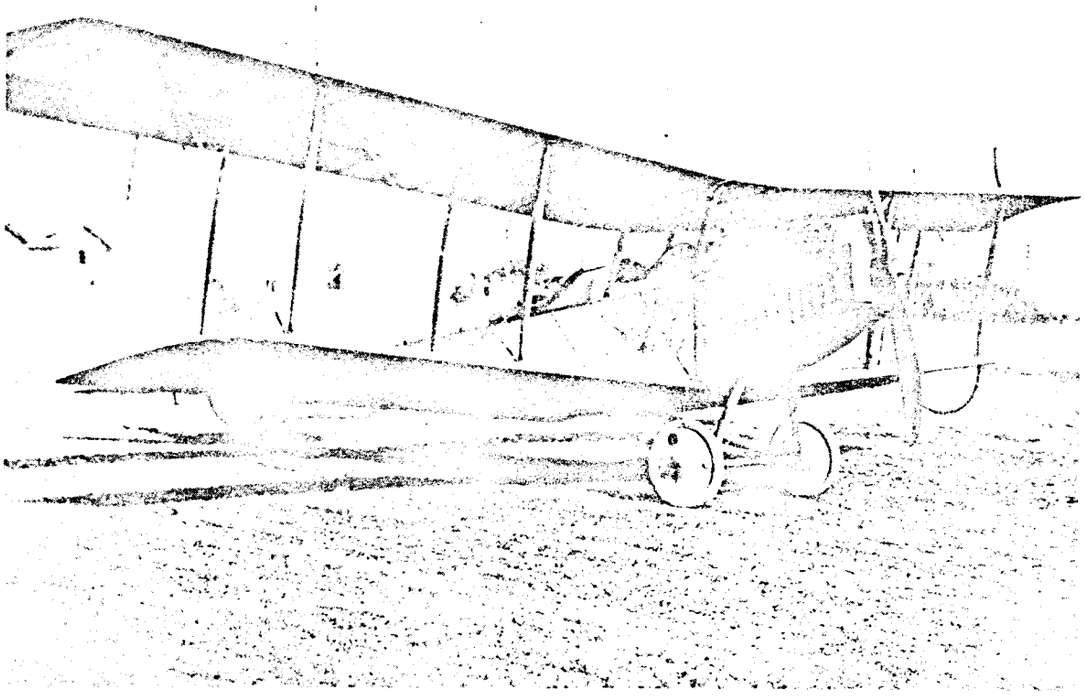
World War I brought aviation activities back to Montgomery. With the establishment of an aviation repair depot on tne land which once accommodated the Wright school, the role of military aviation was assured with other vital links in tne nation's chain of defense.

Birth of an Air Repair Depot (World War I)

Soon after the United States declared war on the Central Powers in 1917, Army boards began to look around the country for suitable sites for military airdromes. The Kohn real estate which previously had been used by the Wright brothers

came under early consideration by Army officials. Since training fields were to be established in Florida, and a site east of Montgomery (Taylor Field) had been selected as favorable for flying training, it was necessary to provide a repair depot to keep these installations constantly supplied with planes and engines in order that training might proceed uninterrupted.

Overtures to acquire the land for the government were started and on April 4, 1918, the deal was consummated. The



World War I aircraft - the Curtiss "Jenny"

302-acre purchase was made by the Federal government from Mr. Frank D. Kohn for approximately $35,000. Of this area 203 acres were reserved for the flying field proper and the balance was to be used for building purposes. Progress was rapid once the land was acquired.

The contract for the construction of the buildings was let

and work started on April 8, 1918. Light, water, and railroad services were extended from Montgomery to the aeroplane repair shops then under construction. Fifty-two buildings were completed and released to military authorities ninety days later. At one time there were 1,200 employees on the contractor's payroll. The cost to the government for this project, including the construction of about three miles of tarvia surfaced roads, was approximately $819,000.

Machinery was received at the repair depot for the manufacture of aeroplanes and the first "made-in-Montgomery" aeroplane was tested and exhibited at a public celebration at the depot in September 1918.

In addition to the military personnel operating the repair depot in 1918, quartermaster and medical units were assigned in August 1918.

During World War I, activities of the Engine and Repair Depot were limited to supporting services for the air fields in the surrounding area. The following were provided maintenance and repair service for their aircraft: Gerstner Field, Lake Charles, Louisiana; Payne Field, West Point, Mississippi; Souther Field, Americus, Georgia; Taylor Field, Montgomery, Alabama; Door Field and Carlstrom Field, both located at Arcadia, Florida.

Very active military training for overseas duty was conducted in Montgomery too. Camp Sheridan, located in the northeast section of the city, provided basic infantry training for military personnel from Ohio, Indiana, and other midwest states. Taylor Field, located approximately 15 miles east of the city, trained the early fliers before their assignment overseas. Taylor Field was one of six fields provided logistical supporting services by the depot located at the present site of Maxwell.

At the close of World War I, military activity at the Aviation Repair Depot was curtailed. Camps and airfields were abandoned throughout the country and only a few flying fields were retained for training Army aviators in peacetime.

The Not So Roaring Twenties

During the twenties, Montgomery's Aviation Repair Depot headed the list of aviation sites to be permanently retained by the War Department. Early in January 1920, Maj. Gen. C. T. Menoher, Chief of the U. S. Air Service, inspected the depot, in company with Col. W. E. Gillmore, Supply Officer of the Air Service. Subsequently, General Menoher announced that he was most gratified with conditions at the field; that he

considered it the best aviation post in the country; and that he anticipated enlargement and increased personnel for the depot as other aviation installations in the country ceased operations.

Later in January a Montgomery newspaper forecast the pattern of things to come when it announced that the geographical location of Alabama's capital city made it a logical point for a station on an airmail line. "Montgomery has ideal landing fields for aeroplanes," the article read. "Its prestige as the possessor of the government's only aviation repair depot, its central location as regards the rich and swiftly developing south, and its obvious advantages as a gateway to the rich and important southwest cause local authorities in both aeronautics and economics to feel certain that when aerial mail service begins to develop on a large scale in the country, the city will be one of the points on the more important lines connecting the north, the south and the southwest."

Also in January, Maj. W. F. Fitzmaurice, Commanding Officer of the Montgomery military post, announced that the War Department had redesignated the Aviation Repair Depot as Montgomery Air Intermediate Depot. Purpose of the change, Major Fitzmaurice explained, was to establish uniform names for the different types of depots throughout the country.

Montgomery's depot suffered a reduction in status in July 1921, when it ceased operation as a repair station and began functioning as a supply station. At this time, also, the Montgomery installation had a 50 per cent reduction in civilian force and a 40 per cent loss in military personnel.

Meanwhile the Montgomery Chamber of Commerce sought to have additional government facilities located at the Montgomery Air Intermediate Depot. The summer of 1921 saw officials of the Chamber of Commerce engaged in negotiations to have the depot converted into a vocational school for disabled soldiers. This project was to be pursued only if the government turned "thumbs down" on the use of the installation as an aviation depot.

Plans for establishment of the vocational school were abandoned in the fall of 1921, however, when the War Department reorganized and located two units at the Montgomery Air Intermediate Depot. The 22nd Observation Squadron and the 4th Photo Section were transferred (in name only) to the Montgomery station. To man the two organizations, enlisted men were transferred from the Americus Air Intermediate Depot, Georgia; Park Field, Tennessee; and Fort Benning, Georgia.

The 22nd Observation Squadron, one of the famous pursuit

squadrons on the front during World War I, at that time had an authorized strength of 25 officers, 90 Air Service enlisted men, 4 Medical Department enlisted men (attached). The 4th Photographic Section, which had also marked up a splendid World War I record, had 1 officer and 20 Air Service enlisted men, with 1 Medical Department enlisted man attached. Prior to acquiring the new personnel, the Montgomery Air Intermediate Depot had 35 Air Service enlisted men, who with the 56 new men made a total of 91.

And with the acquisition of the two new organizations, the local depot received supplemental equipment. The Observation Squadron had 1 automobile, 2 open cars, 8 trailers of various sizes, 12 trucks, 9 airplanes, 39 machine guns of sundry types, and 114 pistols. The Photographic Section had 2 motorcycles, 2 trailers, 4 trucks, and 21 pistols.

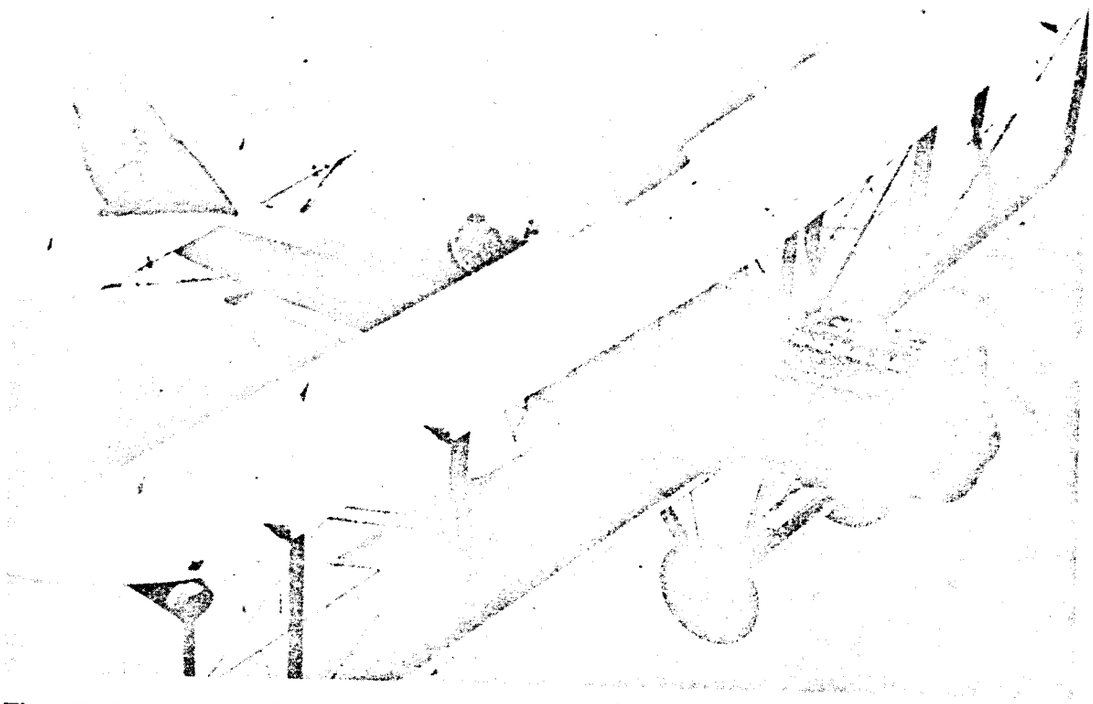
Though hope still existed for the resumption of the aviation depot at Montgomery in late 1921, all hopes vanished in early 1922 when the Army announced that the local supply depot, which had been in existence less than a year, would be abandoned. Cause for this action was continued economy in Army and Navy aviation depots. Closing of the depot at the Montgomery station, it was announced, was to interfere in no way with the full operation of the 22nd Observation Squadron and the 4th Photographic Section.

During tne summer of 1922, additional civilians were discharged from the air depot. On the heels of this action, the Army announced that 58 military posts were to be abandoned. Local citizens, of course, feared that the Montgomery station would become inoperative. However, it was not listed as one of the installations to be closed, and later that fall, the aviation depot maintained at Americus, Georgia, was consolidated with the Montgomery depot.

Only modest activities took place at Maxwell during the next two years.

Soldiers from Maxwell, units of the National Guard, and a fully equipped artillery outfit from Auburn, Alabama, participated in the inaugural parade of Governor W. W. Brandon in January 1923. A formation of five aeroplanes from the Montgomery field, led by Maj. Roy S. Brown, Commanding Officer, circled the city during the inaugural ceremony.

That same month Maxwell acquired a DeHaviland plane for use in instruction and service at the field. Lt. H. A. Batron of the U. S. Air Service flew the plane from Wilbur Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio. Though he made no attempt to break any records, Lieutenant Batron made the trip in 5 hours and 45 minutes. His return trip to Dayton by train required 24 hours'



The DeHaviland-4, World War I craft used by early airmail pilots

travel time.

Maj. R. S. Brown and Lt. A. C. Kincaid, both of Maxwell, won second place in the 100-mile race at the Southern Air Meeting held in Birmingham in the spring of 1924. Flying a DeHaviland, they recorded 52 minutes, 56 seconds for the total stretch.

In mid-January 1925 the War Department recommended that Congress approve a bill providing $380,000 for construction of a permanent barracks building and 13 noncommissioned officers' quarters at Maxwell. The $200,000 for this construction was voted. This action, which assured permanent construction for Maxwell, squelched all rumors that the Montgomery post would be abandoned.

April 1925 marked another historic event in aviation progress for Montgomery - its receipt and dispatch of mail by air. Lt. Robert D. Knapp of Maxwell piloted a DeHaviland plane to deliver mail to New Orleans and Mobile and to dispatch mail he had picked up at those points to Montgomery.

During these early days of air travel, Maxwell played an

important part in acquainting the public with the safety, efficiency, and capabilities of aviation.

A pursuit group of planes from Selfridge Field, Michigan, made a two-stop flight from their home base to Miami, Florida, in early 1925. The flight was a practical demonstration of the preparedness of the air service for any emergency and of the use of aircraft for transportation between distant points in the country. Through the efforts of Maxwell officials, the event was given much publicity in Montgomery. Maxwell Field also serviced the pursuit group planes during their stop at Macon, Georgia (the first stop was made at Wright Field, Ohio). Prior to the planes' departure from Selfridge, Lt. A. Hornsby, a Maxwell pilot, flew 1,500 pounds of tools and servicing equipment to Macon for possible use on the Selfridge craft. Major Brown and Lieutenant Hornsby departed from Maxwell for Macon via air as soon as they received telegraphic notice that the fliers from Selfridge had embarked on their journey. The cross-country experiment was proclaimed a huge success.

Daring demonstrations staged in early 1926 featured parachute jumping, parachute folding, aerial radio broadcasting, and trick flying. Lt. Don Olds piloted the exhibition airplane, a big DeHaviland. Sgt. R. C. Choate, radio expert at Maxwell, communicated by radio from the plane with Pvt. W. C. Hope, who stood on the ground at the installation. "The experiment proved entirely successful and by means of a loud speaker many of the spectators were able to hear Sergeant Choate who was traveling approximately 100 miles per hour," the press notice read. Shortly thereafter, Lt. Johnny Krajeck and Lt. Art Mantel, parachute equipped, bailed out of the DeHaviland, traveling approximately 300 feet before pulling their rip cords. "The spectators, with heads inclined upwards and mouths opened wide, drew gasping breaths of relief as the chutes opened and the speed of the falling men was checked," the press notice continued. "Some four minutes and a few seconds later the daredevils had landed safely on the field."

May of 1927 found Maxwell host to the spring maneuvers of the Air Service. In fighting formation, 79 Army Air Corps maneuver planes staged a mimic sky battle over Maxwell. Gen. Benjamin D. Foulois, Assistant Chief of the Air Corps, and Brig. Gen. Frank Parker commanded the group which included 79 officers and more than 100 enlisted men. Practically every type of plane - from the heavy transport to the fast pursuit - was flown.

With the initial building operations at Maxwell in 1927, under the Air Corps Five Year Expansion Program, the post entered a new era. In October of that year, the first permanent construction - that of a barracks to house 163 enlisted

men - started. The building was finished and released to the government for occupancy on May 15, 1928.

Meanwhile, Montgomery was under consideration as a possible site for the location of a pursuit unit of the Air Corps. Four officers, members of the Attack Group Board of the U. S. Army, visited Montgomery in February to inspect Maxwell and other localities for suitability. They held conferences with military officials, Congressman Lister Hill, and representative citizens. In December 1928, however, the War Department announced that the Army Air Tactical School would be relocated from Langley Field, Virginia, to Maxwell. Shreveport, Louisiana, was to be the home of the pursuit wing.

Maj. Walter R. Weaver, Maxwell's Commanding Officer, announced in January 1929 that the tactical school was to be twice as large as originally planned. This statement was hailed by the community as "another indication that Montgomery is rapidly taking its proper place in the realm of aviation." Instead of opening with 150 men, the school was to begin with 300 men. Work on the erection of buildings was to begin about mid-year, Major Weaver said, and the cost of the project would be approximately $2,000,000.

In February, the Army reported that the Tactical School unit was to be rushed in the War Department Construction Program and that $1,644,298 would be allowed for the construction. The school was to be moved to Maxwell as soon after July 1 as housing facilities could be provided. By late September the chief architect of the War Department had approved plans for the initial unit of the tactical school. Work on the project began in the fall of 1929.

The tactical school building, a two-story and basement, fireproof structure to cost about $150,000, was scheduled for construction first. Construction of quarters for officers and noncommissioned officers as well as technical school buildings was to follow.

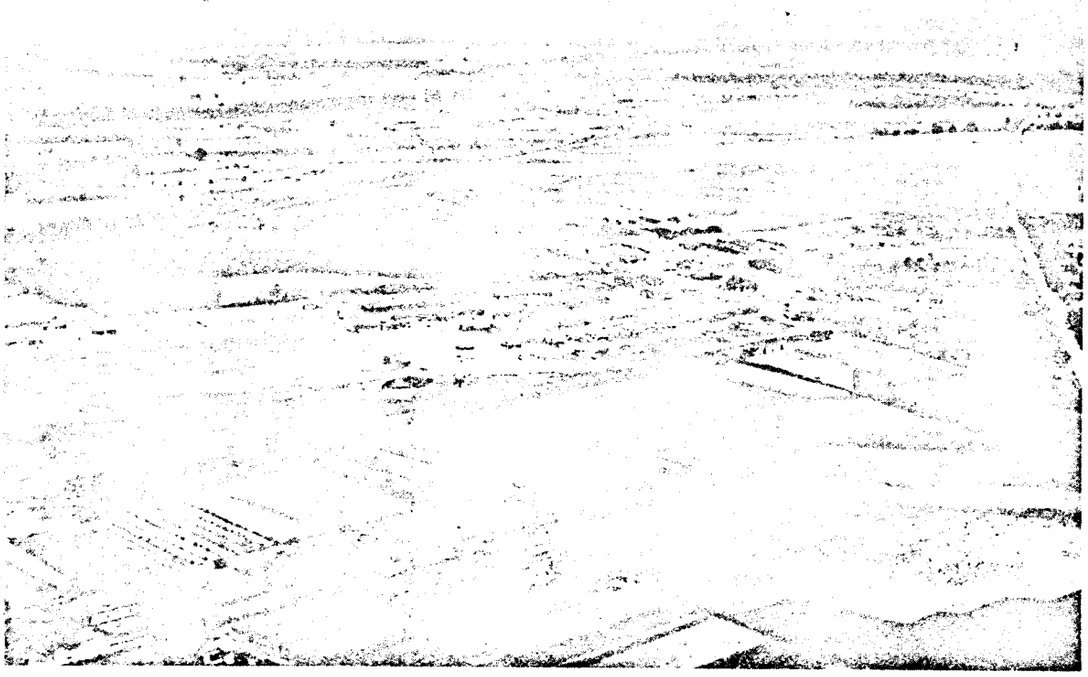
In October the last of approximately 100 deeds to property which the Tactical School would occupy had been signed and dispatched to Washington. Approximately 300 names had to be applied to the various deeds. Consummating the property transactions was a time-consuming and difficult task, since some individuals whose signatures were necessary on the deeds lived in distant parts of the United States and Canada.

And during the year of Alabama's great flood, two small news items that received obscure publicity were of interest to the local community.

The first item, an announcement by Maxwell officials that

parachute jumps would be made only at the Montgomery army field, at the municipal airport and at other airports in the vicinity of Montgomery, was a true indication of aviation's popularity in the community. "A deluge of requests for parachute jumps at family reunions, picnics, baseball games . . . necessitated this order," officials said.

The second item was headlined "To Horse, To Horse, Shouts Commander of Army's Aviators." It said, in essence, that 17 horses were being shipped from Nebraska to Maxwell for use of the officers of the post in keeping "fit" and to stimulate



An air view of Maxwell Field in 1929

interest in polo. This was indicative, perhaps, that "old Dobbin" still played a part in military operations - even in the dawning age of the airplane.

Flood of Twenty-Nine - Air Relief

March 14-20 brought the disastrous flood of 1929 which

ravaged South Alabama, killing more than 15 persons, rendering thousands homeless, inundating rich farmlands, destroying nearly 5,000 houses, 2,615 buildings, and thousands of acres of crops. Flood victims, driven from their homes by swirling waters that submerged homes and buildings and cut wide torrents across towns, took refuge on housetops, on diminutive knolls, in treetops in numbers of towns and villages. Millions of dollars in property damage were sustained, including damage to highways, railroads, real estate, and personal property.

On the night of March 14, Alabama's governor, Bibb Graves, appealed to the Army for help, stating that the only way to reach the people of stricken sections was by airplane. He told Maxwell's Commanding Officer, Maj. Walter R. Weaver, that he was ordering the Alabama National Guard flying corps from Roberts Field, Birmingham, to report to the Army commander. Major Weaver, immediately responding to the governor's call for help, explained the situation to his men and instructed them to make ready to move anywhere at any time for almost any purpose. Within half an hour, the post was ready for any emergency.

The first reconnaissance planes reported these Alabama towns as being submerged in flood waters: Elba, Geneva, Brewton, Pollard, Keego, River Falls, Gantt, Flomaton, Samson, Sparta, and Castleberry. In addition, the area between Selma and Demopolis and the area along the Tombigbee River from Demopolis to the confluence of the Tombigbee and Alabama Rivers, thence northeast along the Alabama River to Selma, were reported to be in grave danger.

Meanwhile, the Montgomery military post acquired a wartime appearance. All leaves for military members were revoked, and no military personnel could leave the field without special permission. Planes returning to Maxwell from the flooded sites remained at the field not more than 10 minutes at a time before a fresh pilot took them out again. The incoming pilot then took an hour's rest before beginning another flight.

During the entire flood relief period, planes from Maxwell made 346 flights, covering approximately 60,000 miles, chalking up 664 hours and 10 minutes in flying hours. Thirty-four round trips were made to the flooded area on March 15; 69 on March 16; 75 on March 17; 81 on March 18; 56 on March 19; and 31 on March 20.

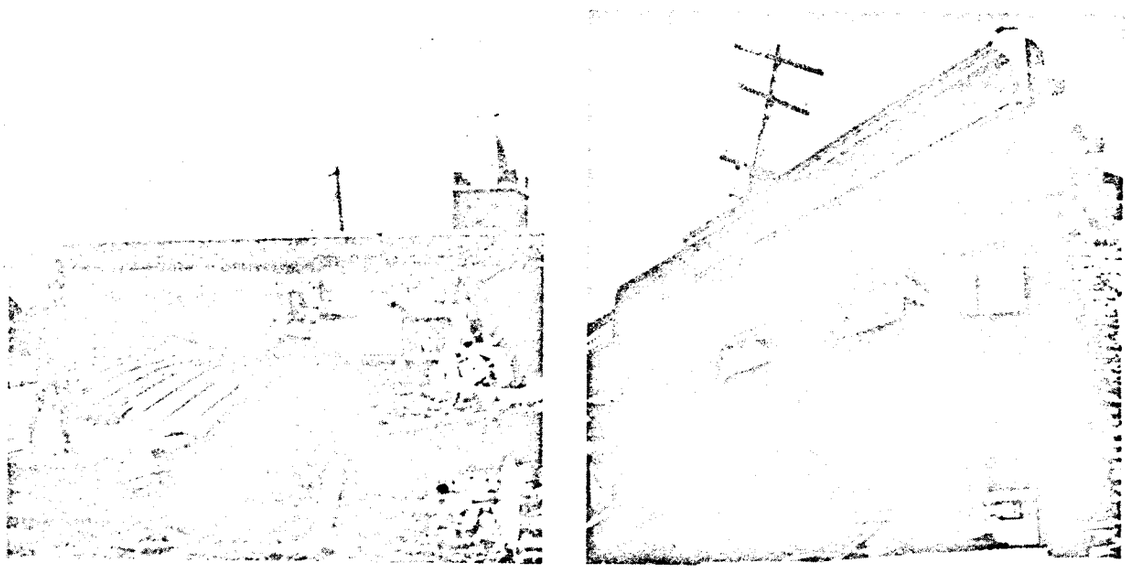
Aerial equipment used in the rescue expedition included four PT-1 light airplanes equipped with Hispano-Sweezer motors and seven O2-H planes with Liberty motors, all regular Army equipment at Maxwell. From the National Guard there were three O-18 planes with Wright Whirlwind motors and three O-11 planes with Liberty motors. Langley Field sent six O-11 planes with Liberty motors and three A-3 ships with Wright D-12 motors. An Army Douglas transport,

C-1, also joined the expedition as did a Buhl Airsedan from the Naturaline Company of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

These planes ferried 27½ tons of freight during the emergency period. None of the planes (except the Douglas transport) was designed to carry freight. No record was maintained of the clothing transported by airplanes to the disaster zone, since all clothing was donated to the American Red Cross with the exception of 5,400 blankets which the Red Cross purchased.

To show the enormity of the rescue operation, official records disclosed that the following quantities of vital supplies, along with many others, were dropped from planes: 6,400 loaves of bread, 540 packages of crackers, 1,010 cans of evaporated milk, 200 heads of cheese, 920 cans of Army hardtack, 500 candles, 4,516 pounds of assorted canned cooked meats, 42 cases of matches, 300 pounds of sugar, 200 pounds of coffee, 20 cases of sardines, 50 cases of pork and beans, 1,651 pounds of bacon, 105 boiled hams, 50,000 drinking cups, scores of different sorts of medicines and bandages, including typhoid vaccine. These were but a fraction of the tons of necessities supplied by the planes.

Newspapers throughout the nation heralded the flood rescue work as a demonstration of the efficiency of the airplane and



Ruins of buildings in Elba, Alabama, showing debris left after flood waters receded

of the trained aerial observer in providing assistance quickly to distressed thousands in an area which otherwise would have been inaccessible for days.

Montgomery's morning paper, the Advertiser, announced: "The people of the flooded areas of Alabama are no doubt experiencing a singular sense of gratitude to that great modern agency, the airplane, and in particular to Maxwell Field of Montgomery. The planes that have gone out from Maxwell Field to the stricken communities in South and Southeast Alabama have been the most potent single factor in giving first aid to the distressed people. They were the first visitors from the outside world, arriving early to signal the marooned and helpless people and give them hope."

"Almost every day Montgomery's pride in Maxwell swells," another editorial read, "and the manner in which the commandant, Major W. R. Weaver, and his officers and men have risen to the occasion in the current flood crisis has served to deepen the affection in which the post is held here."

But perhaps the most gratifying tribute to the Maxwell fliers came from the flood victims themselves. One pilot reported a moving incident. On the third day of the rescue he directed his plane toward a housetop on the outskirts of Brewton, where two days before he had dropped food to a group of refugees. As he approached the site, he saw the flood victims engaged in bustling activity. Maneuvering his aircraft quite close, he saw, outlined in white cloth, the words: "God Bless You."

"One must see houses upside down, on their sides, and roofs and walls split open to understand and actually know the damage done," an Elba businessman said. "Elba in its wrecked condition, however, has been touched deeply by the efforts of Montgomerians and other Alabamians to assist. If Elba and the other flooded towns had not received the immediate assistance of the Maxwell Field air forces and the other rescue units, our plight would indeed have been sad."

Educating Future War Leaders - The Thirties

In December 1929, a bill was introduced in the House of Representatives appropriating $320,000 for acquiring 1,075 acres of land in Montgomery County, Alabama, for the enlargement of the air field at Montgomery. No land was bought by the United States government, however, for nearly three years.

In order to encourage Congress to enact the appropriation, the city of Montgomery offered the United States government 75 acres of land for the enlargement of Maxwell Field. In May of 1930 President Hoover signed a bill accepting this gift of land.

In mid-1930 Congress appropriated $200,000 for the purchase of additional land for Maxwell Field. This appropriation was granted as a result of the War Department's decision to move the Air Corps Tactical School from Langley Field, Virginia, to Montgomery. The land desired by the War Department was a series of tracts between the Alabama River and the Birmingham highway. The area was roughly northwest of Montgomery and consisted of 737 acres. Two years of litigation, involving condemnation proceedings, delayed the final acquisition of this land. Decision was reached on May 17, 1932, after $91,371 was determined to be a fair price for the land. The tract was purchased in August 1932. At the conclusion of this purchase Maxwell acreage increased to 1,132 acres: 320 acres purchased in 1918; 75 donated by the city of Montgomery in 1930; and 737 acres acquired in 1932.

With the location of the Air Tactical School at Maxwell, a small amount of property was still required. Thirteen lots of nearly eight acres were deeded to the U. S. Government on July 17, 1933, bringing the total acreage to 1,140 at that date.

Although observational and photographic activities continued at Maxwell Field until 1931, the matter of greatest interest on the field after the spring of 1929 was the Air Corps Tactical School.

This school had been operating at Langley Field, Virginia, since October 10, 1920. In March 1929, a board was appointed

Heavy snowfalls at Langley Field in 1930-31 impeded Air Corps Tactical School activities

to determine the location of buildings on Maxwell Field to house the Tactical School.

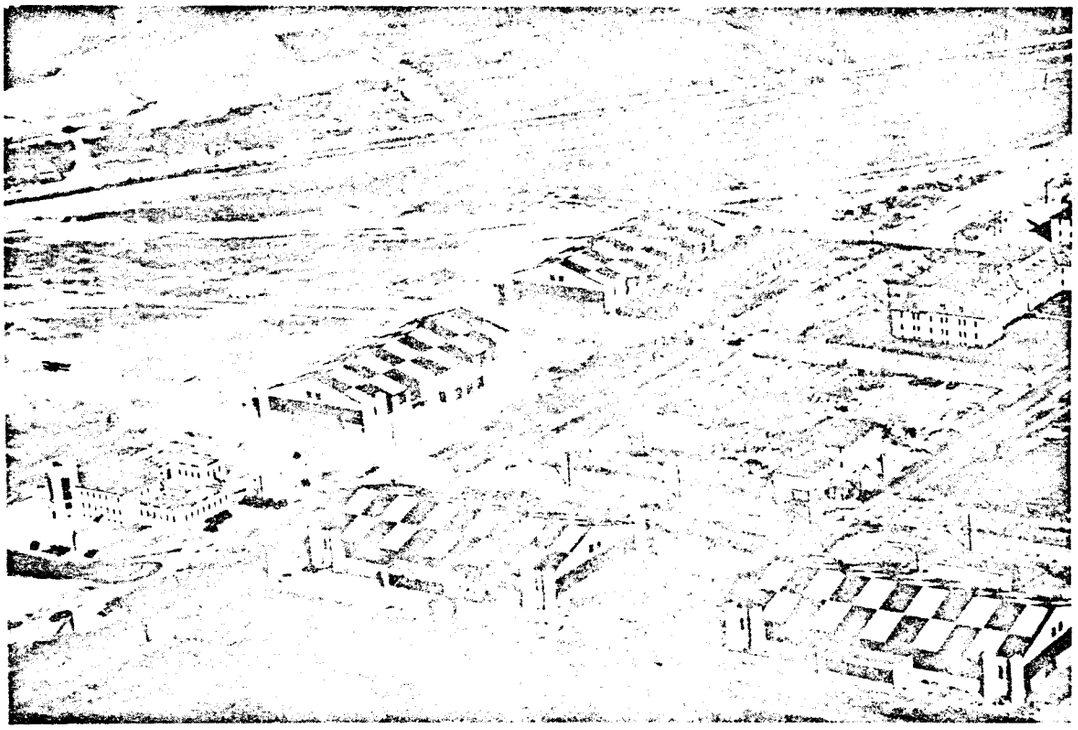
The reason for the transfer of the school was the same that Wilbur Wright had for his choosing of Maxwell -- that the weather in central Alabama permitted almost year-round flying. The severity of the winter of 1930-31 at Langley Field (where the snow piled up to a depth of nearly four feet) brought matters to a climax. It was decided that the class then in session would be the last at Langley.

The Air Corps Tactical School was transferred to Maxwell in the spring of 1931 with the first detachment of troops arriving at the field on June 27, 1931. From the middle of 1931 until 1940, the Air Corps Tactical School was not only the center of Maxwell Field activity, but also, for all practical purposes, was Maxwell Field. This period has been referred to as "The Pre-War Golden Age of Maxwell."

The school and its facilities improved gradually at Maxwell. The construction program begun in 1930 added new landmarks from appropriations of WPA and PWA funds. Before the end of March 1934, 62 sets of officers' quarters had been built, and by the end of that year 24 more had been completed, as well as noncommissioned officers' quarters, a quartermaster warehouse, garages, a water tank, and other buildings.

By the end of 1938 Maxwell Field had become a large air installation. At that time, for school and field administration and maintenance purposes, it had a large school building for the Tactical School, an operations and headquarters building, four quartermaster warehouses, a quartermaster office and a commissary, a quartermaster garage. For aircraft maintenance, it had six hangars, an engineering building, an airplane assembly building, and an Air Corps supply building. The field was being serviced by its own electrical and gasoline distribution systems. The installation of a new $9,624 "aqua system" made it possible to refuel ships on the line. Telephone and water systems had also been installed. On-base housing consisted of 99 sets of officers' quarters, 77 sets of noncommissioned officers' quarters, 3 enlisted men's barracks capable of housing 489 men, and bachelor officers' quarters for 18 officers. Extensive recreational facilities had been provided: 2 swimming pools, 3 volley ball courts, a bowling alley, a cinder track, a baseball diamond, a football field, 6 tennis courts, a skeet range, a squash court, an 18-hole golf course, a theater of 300 seats, an officers' club, and an NCO club. Most of the streets and sidewalks were paved.

Prior to the advent of the Air Corps Tactical School, personnel strength was modest at Maxwell Field. In the spring of 1931, 140 enlisted men, 35 officers, and 35 civilians



Hangars D, E, F, G; Air Corps Barracks; Fire and Guard House; Headquarters Building, Maxwell Field, Alabama (November 1931)

made up the entire complement. By September of that year the population on Maxwell had increased by over nine time to 1,988 personnel. This total included 1,155 civilians, 689 enlisted men, 138 officers, 5 nurses, and 1 warrant officer.

The Air Corps Tactical School was singular in the United States. It taught officers of the Air Corps and other military services, strategy, tactics, and techniques of the employment of air forces. Particular emphasis went to the employment of the four general classes of aviation -- attack, bombardment, pursuit, and observation. Each of these four branches was treated separately and then the combined employment was exemplified in the air force course.

After the school moved to Maxwell, increasing emphasis was placed on air matters. There were two reasons for this significant development.

In the first place, a far greater volume of material on military aeronautics was then available so that the courses in tactics and techniques of the various classes of aviation grew steadily and the course in the employment of airpower,

which in early years had been shallow at best, expanded into a vitally important year's study.

Secondly, following the creation of the Air Corps in 1926 and the expansion of the air arm, together with the enlarged school facilities at Maxwell, there resulted an increased enrollment at the Tactical School. There was not a proportionate increase in the number of Air Corps officers admitted to the Command and General Staff School to compensate for the expansion of the air arm. Because a smaller percentage of the Tactical School graduates would attend the Leavenworth institution, school authorities by the mid-thirties had ceased to think of the Tactical School as a preparatory school for Command and General Staff School. Instead, it was considered as the most advanced school that air officers were likely to attend. Thus, by the mid-thirties more than half of the school year was devoted to instruction in air subjects.

During its early years the Air Corps Tactical School frequently sustained shortages in its faculty staff. The disadvantages of a small faculty were offset by the high caliber of the commandants, assistant commandants, directors, and in many instances, the individual instructors.

The "Tac" school roster is a star-studded one. Our present Chief and Vice Chief of Staff, USAF, Gen. Thomas D. White and Gen. Curtis E. LeMay, are graduates of the Air Corps

Gen. Thomas D. White, then a captain (fourth from right, last row), was a student in Class 1937-38, Air Corps Tactical School

Tactical School (Maxwell). It was at the Tactical School that Lt. Gen. Claire L. Chennault taught and developed his pursuit aviation tactics which paid such big dividends during World War II. It was here that Gen. Laurence S. Kuter pioneered bombardment aviation which was to make American aerial bombing the most deadly and accurate in the annals of military aviation.

The standards followed in the selection of students for Air Corps Tactical School had been altered by the mid-thirties. Earlier standards required that officers attending the school be of average grade, age, and experience. By 1935, the requirement was that officers should be above the grade of second lieutenant and should have an efficiency rating of not less than excellent. Furthermore, not more than 14 per cent of the quota of students were to come from the field officer grade and not more than 60 per cent from the grade of captain. All officers of the various eligible grades were placed annually on a list indicating their general average efficiency ratings; then within the various percentages in grade, the officers having the highest rating were assigned to the school by the Chief of the Air Corps.

For the most part, graduates of the Air Corps Tactical School furnished the leadership of the American air arm during World War II. On December 7, 1941, by far the greater portion of the 916 air officer graduates of the school were still on duty, because almost two-thirds of the graduates completed the school during the final five years of its existence. In fact, 380 Air Corps officers graduated from the four short courses conducted during 1939-1940. Thus, many air officers of World War II had attended the Air Corps Tactical School where they received a clear and decisive concept of the proper employment of airpower.

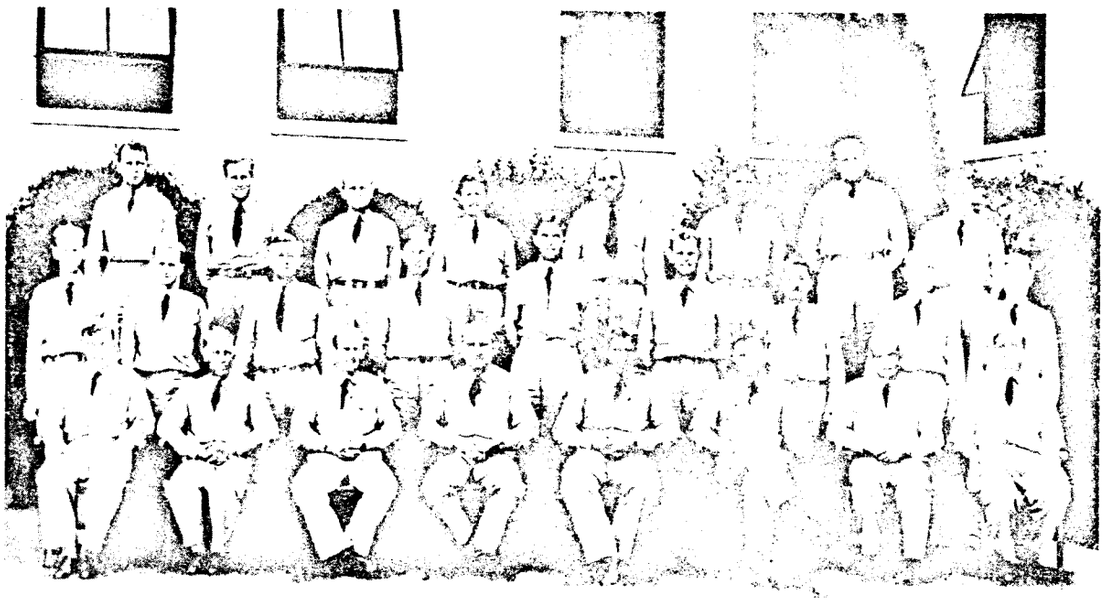
Most key Air Corps officers went through the Tactical School at one time or another and carried their lessons with them. Three hundred and twenty general officers on duty with the Army Air Forces at the close of World War II were Air Corps Tactical School graduates. Of even more significance is the fact that the three four-star generals -- McNarney, Kenney, and Spaatz -- and 11 of the 13 three-star generals -- Emmons, Brett, Yount, Eaker, Giles, George, Cannon, Vandenberg, Stratemeyer, Twining, and Whitehead -- were graduates of the school.

The list of general officers on duty at the close of World War II does not include many other eminent Tactical School alumni who served with distinction during the war and who made significant contributions to the development of American airpower.

By the mid-thirties the feeling was growing that the Air Corps Tactical School was not reaching a sufficient number of

Air Corps officers as its yearly capacity was limited to 60 to 70 officers. Late in 1938, Maj. Gen. H. H. "Hap" Arnold, Chief of the Air Corps, directed that a study be made to determine whether it would be feasible to suspend the regular nine-month course and institute a series of short courses in order to permit more officers to attend the school. As a result of the study it was determined to discontinue the regular course and institute three special 12-week classes a year, with an enrollment of 100 students.

Prior to the implementation of the short courses in the



Gen. Curtis E. LeMay, then a first lieutenant (third from right, last row), was a student in Class 1939-40(1), ACTS

ACTS, the Tactical School was asked to make a study of possible reduction of its activities during the initial phases of the Air Corps expansion program which began in January 1939. The Air Corps was faced with the problem of providing qualified officers for responsible positions during the expansion and at the same time of continuing its normal administrative and operating functions. Obviously, faculty members at the school and school graduates were particularly well equipped to fill

special assignments in the expansion program. It was obvious that if the school were closed completely for one year, several years would be required to rebuild it to its current efficient status. The problem posed, therefore, was how the school could make a substantial contribution of experienced well-trained officers to the expansion program and at the same time maintain a staff large enough to keep current all of the school activities. The school study concluded that the school should not cease to function altogether. The course should continue to be 9 months long, but the faculty should be reduced by 6 members and classes should be reduced from 60 Air Corps officers to 20, thereby allowing 46 Air Corps officers for school duty.

The outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 sealed the fate of the Air Corps Tactical School. Requirements for well trained officers in the tremendous expansion program which followed that event were far too great to permit the experienced well-trained officers who were attached to the Tactical School to follow their academic pursuits. The series of 12-week courses were allowed to reach completion, but on June 13, 1940, the office of the Chief of the Air Corps directed that instruction be suspended as of June 30 and the staff and faculty be reduced to 5 Air Corps officers and 2 from other branches. This skeleton force was to continue basic research in the preparation and revision of instruction, maintenance of files, research in tactical air doctrine and employment of air forces, with a view to keeping abreast of modern developments and application of airpower pending the resumption of the school at a later date.

In June 1941, the school was placed under the jurisdiction of the Southeast Air Corps Training Center and directed to complete a study of ways and means by which the school could be reopened with a minimum of delay.

Final disintegration of the school occurred in the summer of 1941. Before the end of the summer, the Air Corps Board moved to Eglin Field to become a part of the Proving Ground Command. The school also lost its reproduction department and training film preparation unit.

The skeletonized academic section became a part of the Directorate of Individual Training, Washington, D. C. Despite personnel shortage, the staff produced training literature urgently needed by the Army Air Force, maintained the school files, and tried to keep the courses of instruction in such condition as to facilitate preparation of lectures in the event the school should be reopened.

Efforts by some military leaders to revive the Air Tactical School in the summer of 1942 proved unsuccessful, however. Instead of reopening it, AAF headquarters on October 9, 1942, authorized the establishment of the new AAF School of

Applied Tactics, which operated at Orlando, Florida. While the new organization no doubt covered many problems similar to those handled by the Tactical School, it was a wartime agency that stressed primarily global air war problems, rather than theories of employment.

Maxwell Field, meanwhile, entered another phase in its development as a pillar of national defense, as it embarked on its wartime mission of training personnel to man our air armada.

Intense world tensions of 1939-1940 caused our leaders to appraise critically the nation's armed forces. At the beginning of the conflict in Europe, most Americans felt that the United States was invulnerable to attack as long as American and British fleets had superiority of the seas. With the fall of Poland and France, however, national defense became, almost overnight, the concern of every American. Loosened Congressional pursestrings followed, resulting in appropriation after appropriation and one expanded military program after another.

Strengthening the air arm of the defense department became supremely important, as the country clamored for increased airpower. Maxwell's availability, climate, and inaccessibility to attack by sea, made it a natural for a training center.

Training Programs - World War II

"The road to Tokyo leads through Maxwell Field!"

This was the byword in Montgomery, Alabama, and, in fact, throughout the southeastern United States, during the troubled days of World War II. It was an appropriate statement, too, because Maxwell operated extensive training programs, often more than one simultaneously, from 1940 until the nation emerged victoriously from the war.

In June 1940, Secretary of War Harry H. Woodring announced that the War Department had adopted a plan to produce 10,000 trained men each year, including 7,000 pilots to staff the nation's expanding Air Corps. The plan involved conversion of three Air Corps principal operating bases into training centers. Randolph, Moffett, and Maxwell Fields were to operate the Gulf, West Coast, and Southeast Air Corps Training Centers, respectively.

Officially established at Maxwell on July 8, 1940, the Southeast Air Corps Training Center (SEACTC) took over facilities formerly used by the Tactical School. Austin Hall became the SEACTC headquarters building.

The center was responsible for all pilot, navigation, and

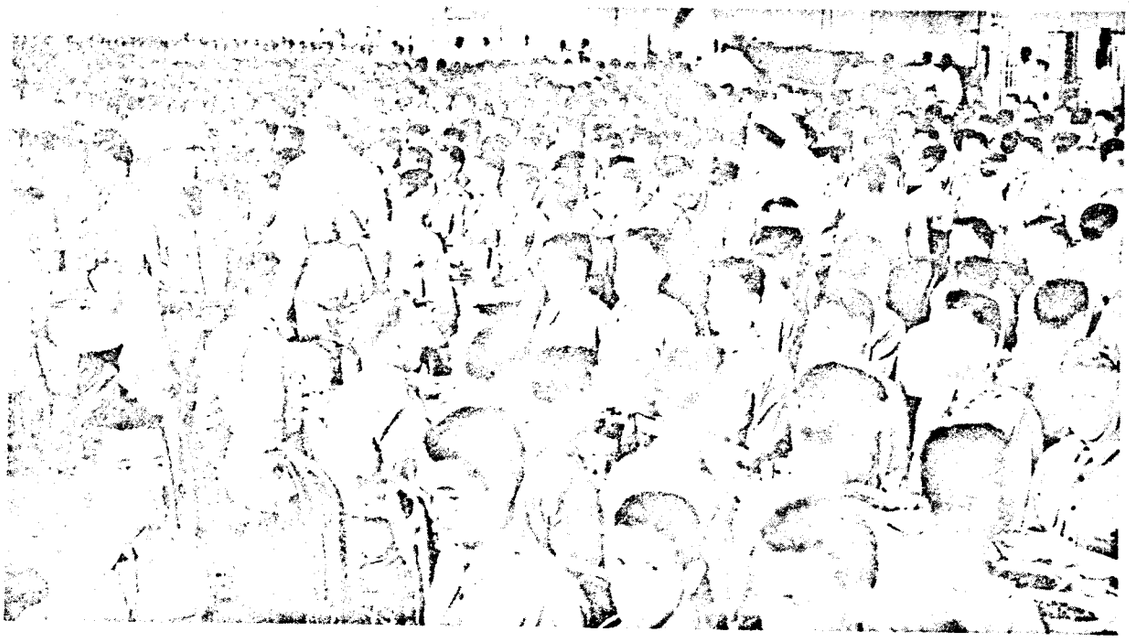
bombardier training of Air Corps cadets assigned to installations in the southeastern section of the country.

The cadet program was open to young men between the ages of 20 and 27 years who could qualify mentally and physically for appointment as flying cadets in the Air Corps. A prerequisite for entrance into the program was two years' college training or successful completion of a mental examination. The program had three phases: primary, basic, and advanced flying training.

Plans called for the establishment of an Advanced Flying School at Maxwell, while Montgomery's Municipal Airport (later named Gunter Field) joined the military family as an Air Corps Basic Flying School. Negotiations for leasing the property began in the spring, and in August, the Air Corps signed a lease for the airport. Since Gunter lacked adequate facilities for the Basic Flying School at the time of its opening, Maxwell served as the temporary home of the school.

First contingent of flying cadets arrived at the new SEACTC on September 9 to process for the initial class of the Basic Flying School. The cadets, numbering 120, were housed in stucco barracks, and a messhall for their use was constructed.

The enormous new training program taxed very heavily facilities at Maxwell. In addition to housing and training cadets,



Cadet Messhall at Maxwell during World War II

Maxwell faced the staggering problem of billeting the enlisted personnel necessary for the training program. In September 1940, 2,000 additional enlisted men came to Maxwell, bringing the total enlisted personnel figure to 6,400 -- an all-time high.

By early November 1940, the Air Corps completed sufficient construction at Gunter to permit occupancy by the Basic Flying School, and that activity transferred from Maxwell to its true home.

The first class of cadets, 104 strong, graduated from the Gunter Basic Flying School in November 1940 and immediately thereafter entered the Advanced Flying School at Maxwell.

"In this gravest time of our history, we are called upon to do much in little time," Brig. Gen. Davenport Johnson, Chief of the Air Corps' Training and Operations Division, told the graduates of Maxwell's first Advanced Flying School class. As the 101 cadets and two student officers assembled to receive their "wings," planes of the succeeding class, 164 strong, zoomed overhead, vividly illustrating General Johnson's words.

In March 1941 military authorities announced that Maxwell was to become a cadet replacement center. To accommodate the center adequately, the government acquired 60 additional acres of land and began work on approximately 100 buildings for Maxwell.

September 1941 marked a new phase in military aviation training at Maxwell, when the Air Corps Replacement Center opened. First of its kind in the United States, the center provided cadets with rudimentary military knowledge and improved their physical condition prior to their enrollment in flying schools. The center had two phases of instruction: (1) an initial training school through which all cadets entering SEACTC passed, and (2) a reconnaissance school for those who failed to qualify as pilots and who elected to remain in the service as bombardiers and navigators. Pilots who had only the initial phase, spent five weeks at the center; navigators and bombardiers, eight weeks.

Initial class at the Replacement Center had about 680 members. Later, however, when the center went into full operation, 2,700 cadets were in attendance, with a turnover of 1,850 each five weeks in the initial training school and a turnover each eight weeks of 850 in the reconnaissance phase.

The defense department chose SEACTC to conduct training for 8,000 Britons each year to qualify them for combat service in the Royal Air Force. The first contingent of British cadets,

numbering about 750, arrived in the fall of 1941. RAF cadets from every walk of life in Britain, many with outstanding combat service, composed this group and other groups processed at the Maxwell center. These trainees, together with other RAF students in training at Gunter's Basic Flying Training School and the French cadets who received basic training at Gunter, constituted a large part of the military personnel at the two bases in the early 1940's. They brought with them an international atmosphere which has since continued at Maxwell as Allied officers attend Air University schools.

With the United States' entry into World War II, training became even more accelerated in the SEACTC. January 1942 found the largest class thus far graduating from Advanced Flying School. The class was a combination of American and British aviation cadets. The Replacement Center, too, continued operations in full swing.

Maxwell acquired another phase of training in mid-1942 -- the Central Instructors School. During the period of rapid expansion of the air arm, just prior to Pearl Harbor, instructors available for the training program were dangerously sparse and, for the most part, poorly trained. The situation became so critical that on May 25, 1942, the Central Instructors School was established at Maxwell Field to train flying instructors to teach the vast numbers of student pilots in the SEACTC.

Shortly after the advent of this school at Maxwell, the Advanced Flying Training School transferred to Albany, Georgia. Flying instruction at Maxwell, therefore, was restricted to the operation of the Central Instructors School. The Replacement Center, which in the summer of 1942, became the AAF Preflight School for Pilots, continued in operation, but, of course, had no flying activities.

At the Central Instructors School, seasoned fliers received further training in single and twin engine airplanes along with instruction on "how to instruct." It served actually as a post-graduate pilot school, with the following mission: to teach instructors how to fly the airplane; to standardize necessary performance maneuvers; and to work out experimentally and to standardize the most efficient methods of flying instruction.

The school worked under no specific directives as to the method of accomplishing its mission. On the basis of experiments in the school, methods of performing maneuvers and of giving instruction were codified and compiled in the form of a manual. This manual formed the basis of instruction in schools throughout the SEACTC.

The war year 1943 marked the turning point of the conflict

in Europe, and a huge aircraft called the Superfortress (B-29) proved itself worthy of mass production.

Expanded facilities, a new type of pilot training, distinguished visitors, and "lady soldiers" were on the agenda for Maxwell Field.

A new route for the entrance of the Birmingham highway and railroad into Montgomery, necessitated by the expansion program, had been decided in late December 1942. Condemnation proceedings which were instituted to acquire approximately 1,000 acres of land (33 tracts on which 13 residences were located) for this project were closed. U. S. Highway 31 and the railroad were scheduled to run parallel to each other, requiring approximately one-half mile of new construction. A veil of secrecy encased the Maxwell project, however. Local citizens knew what changes were in progress. The what and why of the changes were classified information which the Army made public some six months later.

With the graduation of the preflignt school on February 26, 1943, the RAF cadets took leave of SEACTC and Maxwell Field.

To standardize training further and to effect uniform instruction throughout the United States, military authorities decided to establish one Instructors School at Randolph Field, Texas. Two Instructors Schools (West Coast and Gulf Coast), in addition to the one at Maxwell, had been operating in the States. In March 1943, the Central Instructors School moved from Maxwell to Randolph where it was consolidated with the two other pilot schools. Maxwell then devoted its training efforts to the Preflight School.

Spring of 1943 saw the installation of the AAF recognition system for pilots at the Preflight School. The system of identification utilized pictures of "warcraft" which were projected on a screen of varying exposure times, ranging from three seconds for ships to 1/25th or 1/50th of a second for airplanes. Students had to identify the craft in those time limits.

Maxwell, along with Gunter Field and Montgomery, hosted eminent visitors during the spring of that war-filled year. Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary, along with Field Marshal Sir John Dill, Chief of the British Joint Staff Mission in the United States, and Gen. George C. Marshall, U. S. Army Chief of Staff, and their aides, visited Montgomery in April. As the dignitaries arrived, more than 100 planes from Gunter Field roared over Montgomery in one of the most spectacular air shows then unreeled in Alabama skies. President Roosevelt was a visitor to the Preflight School, too. His visit, understandably, was cloaked in secrecy.

Somewhat later, Lord Halifax, British Ambassador to the United States, visited Montgomery and its two military installations. To an amassed formation of thousands of cadets he declared that air strength would be the greatest element in shortening the war. "When the war is over," the British Ambassador said, "and your lads and my lads again come home, I hope they will bring with them a message of friendship for the days to come -- to your country and to the British Commonwealth of Nations, as a result of having known each other."

And during the spring of 1943 Montgomery welcomed its first "dough girls." One hundred and fifty-six members of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps arrived at Maxwell to take over jobs as clerks, stenographers, photographic technicians, radio and telephone operators. A few weeks later, Gunter received its first WAAC members. Twenty-four smartly uniformed young ladies comprised the initial Gunter WAAC detachment.

In early July 1943, President Roosevelt signed the bill transforming the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps into the Women's Army Corps. Personnel at Maxwell, where more than 150 of the former auxiliaries had released as many soldiers for combat duty, received this news enthusiastically. Col. Elmer J. Bowling, Maxwell's Commanding Officer, welcomed the women of the corps into the Army in a short statement commending them on their record at Maxwell.

With the departure of the Central Instructors School, flying at Maxwell came practically to a halt during the early summer months of 1943. In July, however, Maxwell issued an enthusiastic welcome to a new flying activity -- the Army Air Forces Pilot School (Specialized-Four Engine). AAF officials announced the imminent opening of the school in early July, explaining the purpose of the expansion of the field as the incoming program.

For security reasons, size and scope of the modifications and new construction still were not made public. "But some notion of their importance may be gained from the fact that the runways of reinforced concrete are approximately a mile in length," a Montgomery reporter wrote.

Late in July, the first Liberator bomber landed at the post, ushering in a new era for Maxwell. "As it began to descend," the press reported, "the tricycle landing gear seemed to sprout from the gigantic bird with two oval tail fins. Down it glided until its tremendous wheels skimmed the concrete." Other Liberators followed, and in early August the entire contingent assembled at Maxwell ready for the school's opening.

As the name implied, students in the course were already

pilots when they enrolled. They ranged in rank from lieutenant to colonel. Instruction aimed at acquainting pilots of smaller aircraft with the more complicated four-engine planes. Students of the school included graduates of advanced twin-engine schools who were selected because of their potential ability to pilot the four-engine planes. The transition school was of nine weeks' duration.

Experience gained by AAF pilots on combat missions was the basis on which the faculty determined their teaching procedures. Student pilots were graded on two counts -- flying ability and leadership.

Training actually began on August 5, 1943, when a B-24 Consolidated Liberator bomber, with four supercharged engines, took off from one of Maxwell's newly constructed runways carrying four students, a crew chief, and an instructor. With this flight began the training of airplane commanders for AAF bombers on what was virtually a production line basis. Thus another chapter of Maxwell's already brilliant wartime record began.

In mid-August, Col. Elmer J. Bowling, Maxwell Commanding Officer, prophesied Maxwell's role in the peacetime world to come. "When the war is over," Colonel Bowling said, "there will be a great need for a university of the air. You have all that is needed here. To what better purpose could it be put?"

Late summer, 1943, saw the AAF Southeast Training Center redesignated AAF Eastern Flying Training Command. In a sweeping reorganization plan, the War Department divided the coast-to-coast training system into Eastern, Central, and Western areas. Only shortly theretofore, the AAF Training Command, which integrated the Flying Training and Technical Training Commands, had been formed.

Formal ceremonies dedicating the extensive new facilities at Maxwell took place in late December 1943. Though the larger part of the new facilities had been in use since August when the AAF Pilot School was established, the vast project was not completed until early December. Highlights of the dedication ceremonies were a speech by Alabama's Senator Lister Hill and the unveiling of a marble monument to Lt. William C. Maxwell and Orville Wright. A parade by thousands of cadets who were attending the Preflight School and an aerial review by 24 Liberators flying low in formation culminated the ceremonies.

Maxwell's schedule in 1944 called for continued flying fortress training, widened preflight training, a generals' parley, and, eventually, loss of the Preflight School.

Early in the year came the announcement that scope of instruction at Maxwell had been expanded to include preflight

training for bombardier and navigator trainees. Previously only those cadets who were to pursue pilot training received preflight instruction at Maxwell. The new step was a natural one, however, since preflight training for navigators, bombardiers, and pilots was exactly the same.

In February 1944, Maxwell hosted a parley of more than 40 Army generals. Discussion of war problems was the purpose of the three-day meeting. Over 30 of the 40 generals viewed their return to Maxwell as a homecoming. Twenty-five of the conferees, then leading figures in the second world war, had attended the Tactical School as students. Many more did tours on the faculty of the Tactical School, instructing in what they called the "devil's magic" - strategy. Could it have been for sentimental reasons that the historic assembly room of the old AAF Tactical School was chosen as the meeting place of the conference?

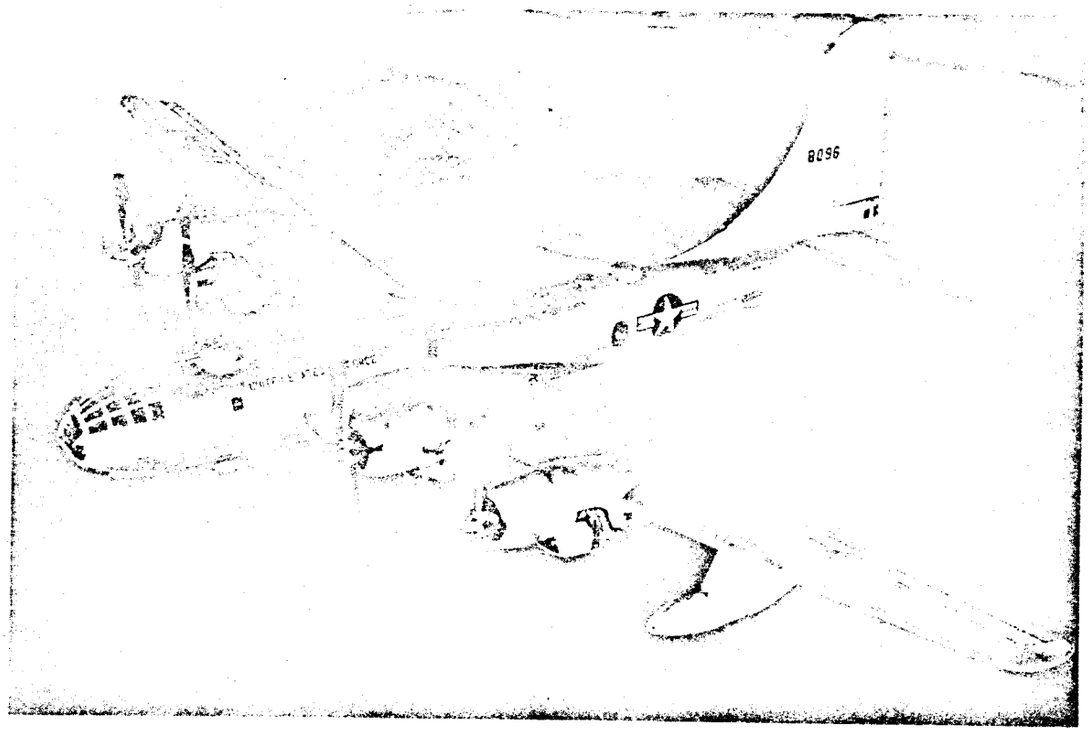
One of eight AAF Convalescent and Rehabilitation Centers authorized for the United States was instituted at Maxwell in early 1944. Three types of patients received treatment at the center: overseas casualties who had progressed to ambulatory cases; men from ports of debarkation suffering from fatigue; and AAF personnel from continental U. S. commands who required physical reclassification or rehabilitation. Basic objective of the center was to restore patients to normalcy and subsequently to return them to their military jobs. The activity was at first confined to the facilities of the Maxwell station hospital. Due to its steady expansion, 15 two-story barracks, a messhall, 12 classrooms, and an administration building at Gunter became a part of the center.

Military authorities reviewed Maxwell's four-engine school records in the fall of 1944. In a little over a year, the school had graduated more than 2,000 pilots, who had amassed more than 255,000 flying hours.

In late September, a formation of eight Superfortresses flying high over Montgomery started a rumor that Maxwell would become the base of a B-29 school. Military officials were silent about this matter at that time, however.

The following month aviation cadets and other students at Maxwell and Gunter received word that their current course of flight training had been extended for five additional weeks. The extension, which began October 16, resulted from a War Department order which explained that the retention step was necessary "because the Army's reservoir of pilots is filled."

The entire nation mourned the death of General Weaver in November 1944. Often called the "Father of Maxwell Field," General Weaver twice commanded the Montgomery post. He was



The B-29 Superfortress in flight

Commanding General of the SEACTC (later the Eastern Flying Training Command) in 1940-41.

December 1944 saw the AAF Preflight School discontinued at Maxwell due to the centralization of all preflight training at San Antonio, Texas. It was on August 27, 1941, that the Cadet Replacement Center, forerunner of the Preflight School, was established at Maxwell. About 100,000 cadets received their preflight training at the school. That same month, December, the 10,000th cadet finished basic training at Gunter Field.

Early in 1945, Maxwell reached another milestone in its aviation career. Superfortress (B-29) transition training for pilots and flight engineers replaced the B-24 four-engine school, which moved to Courtland Army Air Base, Alabama.

B-29 training courses at Maxwell lasted five weeks. Crews trained in increments of three: the airplane commander, the pilot, and the flight engineer. Emphasis went to teaching the three individuals to work together as a smoothly functioning crew. The course included, in addition to extensive ground instruction, from 40 to 50 hours in the air in the giant bombers. Students were hand-picked specialists who had survived exacting

courses of study and practice. In some cases, of course, trainees were combat veterans.

To accommodate the giant B-29's, another expansion program began at Maxwell. Runways originally constructed for the B-24 Liberators were lengthened from 5,500 to 7,000 feet. The War Department also authorized construction of the largest hangar (227 by 202 feet) ever built at Maxwell Field.

Early April found the B-29 transition training at peak production with a class graduating every two and one-half weeks. "The graduates who have been trained in the fundamentals of the B-29's here will go on to advanced training and then to the blazing skies over Japan and Japanese-occupied Asia," Maxwell authorities announced.

In May, military officials announced that the AAF Officers Candidate School and the AAF Preflight School would transfer to Maxwell Field. Plans also called for the establishment of four other courses at the Montgomery installation: Physical Training Instructors Course, Flight Engineer Officers Training Course, Combat Returnee Course, and a Psychological Research Unit. The Preflight School, which returned to Maxwell after an absence of only seven months, was to train Chinese, Mexican, and Brazilian cadets as well as American cadets.

Classes in the Physical Training Instructor Course, Officers Candidate School, Flight Engineer Officers Training Course, and the Preflight School began in June. The War Department canceled transfer of the Chinese Preflight School to Maxwell, but some Chinese soldiers trained at Maxwell later in the year. Mexican and Brazilian students received preflight instruction at the Montgomery installation.

In August, President Truman announced to an amazed world that an atomic bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima, virtually wiping out the island city. Mid-August saw the end of hostilities in the Pacific, following President Truman's announcement of the Japanese surrender.

"The war is won," Brig. Gen. Hume Peabody announced at Maxwell. "Victory has been achieved by teamwork among all the elements of the armed forces, industry, labor, and agriculture. We of the AAF are proud of the contribution we have made toward world peace. But it is a pride that stems from our being a part of a great team -- a team 140,000,000 strong, combined with the strength of 40 United Nations."

In mid-September Maxwell received instructions to establish a separation center to facilitate release from the service of AAF personnel within a radius of 300 miles of Montgomery. The

center, another milestone in Maxwell's peace-winning history, opened on September 17. At the Maxwell separation center, hundreds of AAF personnel, many of whom received preflight, B-24, or B-29 training at Maxwell, wrote finis to their World War II careers.

Montgomery newspapers featured the possibility that the Air Tactical School would be revived at Maxwell. "Maxwell Field is down in the Army Air Forces' peacetime plans as the seat of the Tactical School," one article reported.

Early in November, B-29's left Maxwell for Pyote, Texas, for storage at the rate of seven each day. Later that month came the announcement that the Eastern Flying Training Command would be dissolved and that an education program was in sight for Maxwell Field.

Deactivation of the Eastern Flying Training Command was one of the final steps in Maxwell's transition from wartime to peacetime status. In the final month of 1945, Maj. Gen. David M. Schlatter, acting commandant of the new school to be organized at Maxwell Field, arrived to begin plotting the course of Air University.

Maxwell's wartime boxscore was an impressive one. Its training program produced over 100,000 aviation cadets. Its 2,653 Liberator pilots flew 165,544 hours and made 230,720 landings in the B-24 Transitional School. Its 728 B-29 crews flew 46,554 hours and made 112,809 landings -- without one major accident.

Memorialization

Outstanding air leaders, important in the history of Maxwell and its military education, have buildings and auditoriums named for them and include: Gen. Muir S. Fairchild, Lt. Gen. Millard F. Harmon, Maj. Gen. Herbert A. Dargue, Maj. Gen. James E. Parker, Maj. Gen. Walter R. Weaver, Brig. Gen. Kenneth M. Walker, Col. Karl L. Polifka, Maj. Melvin C. Wood, and 1st Lt. Charles B. Austin.

Naming of Maxwell

Maxwell Air Force Base bears its name in honor of Lt. William C. Maxwell of Atmore, Alabama. He was killed in an airplane crash in the Philippines on August 12, 1920. Lieutenant Maxwell, who was stationed at Camp Stotsenburg, Luzon, at the time of the accident, was making a routine flight from his base to Manila. His plane had developed engine trouble. Selecting the grounds of a sugar plantation, he prepared to make an emergency landing. Not until he was close to the ground did he see some children playing in the path of the plane. He

sought to avoid striking them and flew into a flagpole which was hard to distinguish from a field of cane. The young lieutenant was killed instantly; his mechanic suffered serious injuries.

Born in Natchez, Mississippi, on November 9, 1892, Lieutenant Maxwell later moved with his family to Atmore, in Escambia County, Alabama. At the end of May 1917, he enlisted in the Army at Fort McPherson, Georgia. He was assigned first to the 5th Company, 7th Provisional Training Regiment, and then to the School of Military Aeronautics at Atlanta, Georgia. In November of that year he was transferred for flying cadet training to Kelly Field, Texas. There he was discharged on April 3, 1918, to accept a commission as an officer. His World War I experience did not include overseas duty. After the war he went to the Philippines, where he was serving with the Third Aero Squadron at the time of his death.

Since flying first began at this field, Maxwell has been known by the following names: "Engine and Repair Depot," "Engine and Plane Repair Depot No. 3," "Aviation Repair Depot," "Montgomery Air Intermediate Depot," "Maxwell Field," and "Maxwell Air Force Base." In 1910 the site was known as "Wright's" while in use by the famous Wright brothers.

Fairchild Library

The man who conceived the idea of an Air University, Gen. Muir S. Fairchild, is appropriately remembered in the name of the Air University Library, or Building 1405, which is "Fairchild Library."

A native of Washington state, he performed duties three times at Maxwell during his career -- as a student at the Air Corps Tactical School in 1934-35; as an instructor and Director of Air Tactics and Strategy in the same school, 1937-40; and as Commandant of the Army Air Forces School, later Air University, 1946-48.

From Maxwell, General Fairchild went to the second highest position in the Air Force, Vice Chief of Staff. He held this office when he died of a heart attack in March 1950.

A planner and thinker throughout his career, his name lives on in the name of an air base at Spokane, Washington; the unique Air University Library; and other buildings at Air Force bases throughout the nation.

Austin Hall

Air University Headquarters, Building 800, is named "Austin Hall," in honor of an outstanding pioneer instructor

of the Air Corps Tactical School, 1st Lt. Charles B. Austin.

Illinois native and DePauw University Phi Beta Kappa, Austin was an ACTS instructor from 1924 to 1928. His unusual devotion to duty and his brilliant teaching techniques won for him commendations from his commanders.

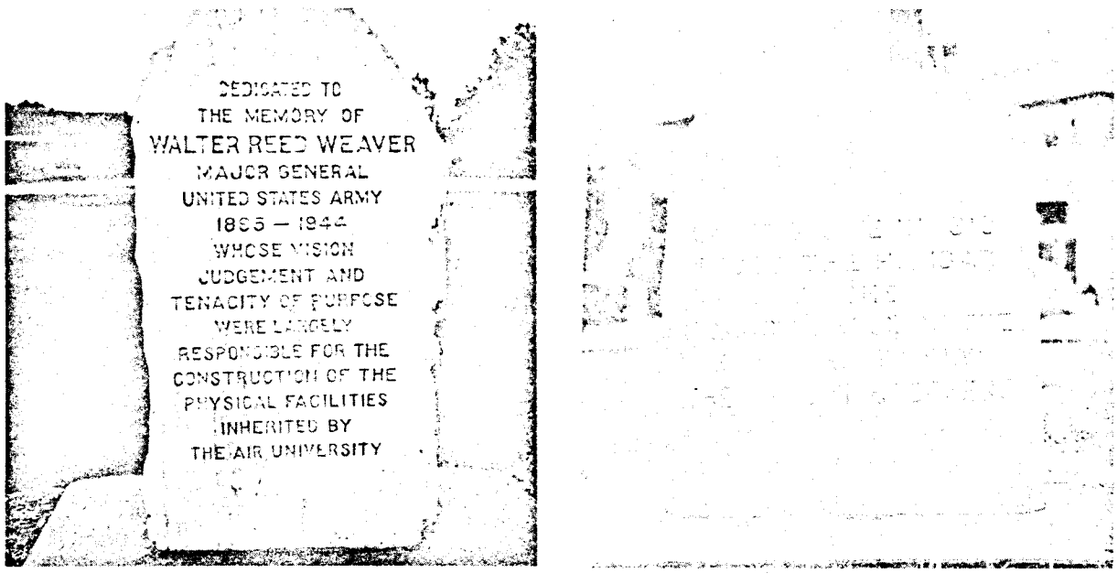
He died in July 1928 following an illness and operation. The building was named for him three years later, the example he set to serve as an inspiration to future students of airpower.

Weaver Theater

At Maxwell during the same period was Maj. Gen. Walter R. Weaver, who was responsible for the base's attaining permanent status in the late 1920's. He was commander during 1927-31 and was responsible for a five-year program of permanent-type building construction, the first for this base.

He returned again in 1939-42 as commander of the Southeast Air Corps Training Center, which controlled bases in this region, and trained thousands of pilots for a rapidly growing air corps.

The Weaver Theater, Building 26, perpetuates the name of the man "whose vision, judgment, and tenacity of purpose were



Stone markers honor aviation pioneers. The Weaver memorial stands near the Main Gate; the Wright memorial, near Base Operations

largely responsible for the physical facilities inherited by Air University." He died in October 1944 after a long illness.

Three graduates of the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, Lt. Gen. Millard F. Harmon, Maj. Gen. Herbert A. Dargue, and Maj. Gen. James E. Parker, served part of their distinguished careers at Maxwell and are now remembered in the names of buildings too.

The three share another similarity: all were killed in aircraft crashes.

Harmon Hall

Building 1403, which houses Squadron Officer School, is named Harmon Hall, in memory of Lt. Gen. Millard F. Harmon, Assistant Commandant of the Air Corps Tactical School from 1938 to 1940.

He was born in California and graduated from West Point in 1912. At the outbreak of World War II, he was a major general in command of Second Air Force. Early in 1932 he became Chief of Air Staff. A few months later he assumed command of the U.S. Army Forces in the South Pacific and teamed with Adm. W. F. Halsey to drive the Japanese westward from the Pacific.

A prolonged sea and air search failed to turn up any trace of his converted Liberator after it was lost on a flight from Kwajalein to Hawaii in February 1945.

Dargue Hall

The Wing Headquarters building, Building 1, bears the name of another Assistant Commandant of ACTS, Maj. Gen. Herbert A. Dargue.

A 1911 graduate of West Point, he became an aviator in 1913. His early career included the punitive expedition into Mexico, under General Pershing, and duty with the AEF, where he studied the training of airmen in France and England. As a major, he was Commanding Officer of the Pan-American flight around South America in 1926-7.

General Dargue was commander of the Northeast Air Defenses in late 1941 when his aircraft crashed into mountains near Palmdale, California.

Parker Hall

Maj. Gen. James E. Parker was an instructor of the ACTS from 1935 to 1940. His long and brilliant military service

is commemorated in Building 501, the Youth Activities Center, which is now called "Parker Hall."

A native of Anniston, Alabama, he was graduated from West Point in 1918. He was made Commanding General of the Fourth Air Force in 1944. He later went to the Pacific as Commanding General of the Twentieth Air Force.

While holding this position he was killed, in March 1946, in the crash of his plane at Hokosekiko, North Formosa.

One other building and two auditoriums at Maxwell bear the names of officers who once served as faculty members here - Brig. Gen. Kenneth N. Walker, Col. Karl L. Polifka, and Maj. Melvin C. Wood. Each was later shot down and killed in combat.

Walker Hall

Building 802, one of the War College buildings, is named "Walker Hall," for Brig. Gen. Kenneth N. Walker.

He was an instructor in the Air Corps Tactical School at Maxwell from 1929 until 1933. He was primarily responsible for the creation of much of the doctrine and concept of bombardment aviation which so vitally affected the outcome of World War II.

General Walker, then Commanding General of the Fifth Bomber Command, was killed in action in January 1943 on a mission against shipping in the harbor of Rabaul, New Britain. He was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

His name is also memorialized in his native state of New Mexico, where the former Roswell Army Air Field is now Walker Air Force Base.

Polifka Auditorium

"Polifka Auditorium," in Building 1403 (Squadron Officer School), bears the name of Col. Karl L. Polifka, a member of the original faculty of Air Command and Staff School.

Colonel Polifka pioneered in the doctrine and techniques of aerial reconnaissance in both the Pacific and in Europe. His contributions at Anzio and other campaigns in Italy resulted in the personal presentation by General Eisenhower of the Distinguished Service Cross.

A 1950 graduate of the Air War College, he went to Korea to command the 67th Reconnaissance Wing. He was leading a flight of RF-51's in July 1951 when he was shot down by small arms fire.

Wood Auditorium

Command and Staff College's auditorium in Building 1402 is named "Wood Auditorium," in honor of Maj. Melvin C. Wood.

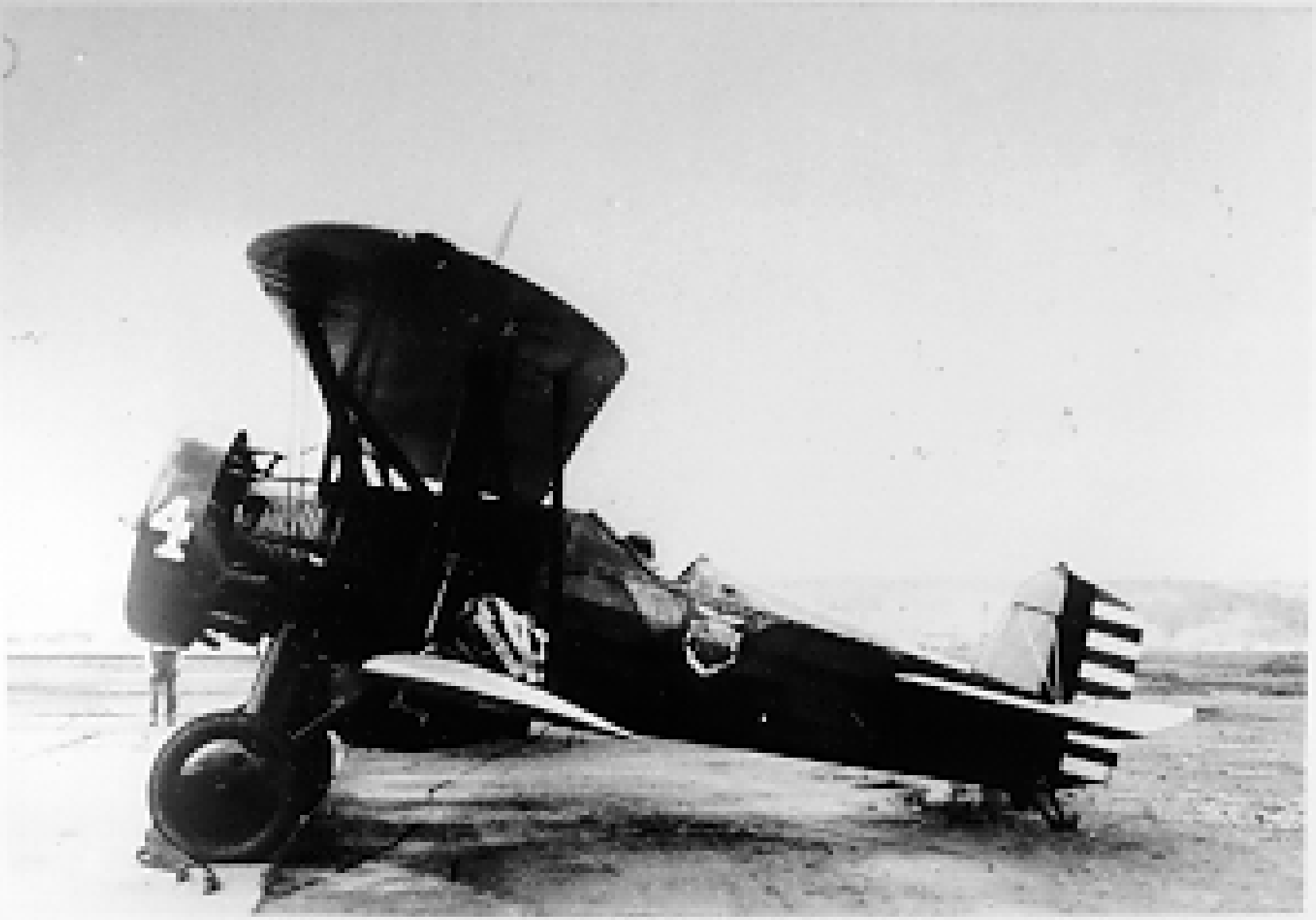
Major Wood was a fighter pilot in World War II and was shot down on his 97th mission, spending the next 14 months as a prisoner of war. An instructor in the Air Tactical School from 1948 to 1952, he contributed a significant share to the philosophy and curriculum of what is now Squadron Officer School.

He lost his life while flying an F-80 on a support mission in Korea during February 1953.

Air University Coat of Arms

The distinctive coat of arms of Air University displaying a mailed fist and four streaks of lightning on its shield, a flaming lamp on its crest and the Latin motto Proficimus More Irretenti, is a familiar sight to the personnel of Air University; yet few know the significance or background history of their emblem.

The green and blue of the shield represent the earth and the sky. Set against this background is the mailed fist, symbolic of war or of the Roman god of Mars, from which extend the four streaks of lightning representing the branches of the Air Corps as they existed in 1929. Pointing horizontally into the blue is the streak of PURSUIT, whose mission is to combat enemy aircraft in the air; and the three pointing down into the green are those of BOMBARDMENT, ATTACK, and OBSERVATION, which carry destruction toward the earth. The flaming lamp of knowledge is winged to symbolize the guiding light of the Air Corps. "We Make Progress by Custom Unhindered" is the translation of the Latin motto. The insignia was originally designed for the Air Corps Tactical School, Langley Field, Virginia, in December 1929.

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